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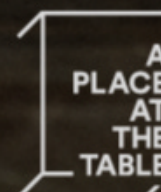
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MAIN STORIES

A TURNING
POINT FOR
DEMOCRATS

p.5 Sen. Kamala Harris



BRIEFING

Searching
for life on
Mars

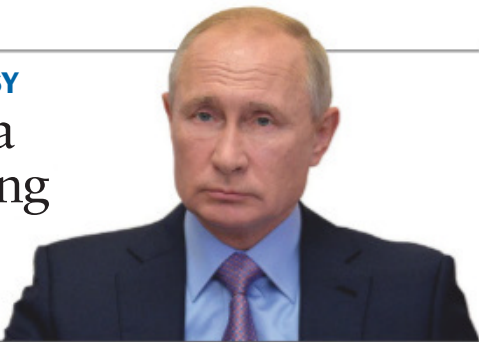
p.11



CONTROVERSY

Is Russia
interfering
again?

p.6 Vladimir Putin



THE WEEK

THE BEST OF THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

Help isn't coming

As millions of Americans face poverty and eviction, federal relief bill stalls

p.4



AUGUST 21, 2020 VOLUME 20 ISSUE 989

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Editor's letter

When a B-29 bomber dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima 75 years ago this month, my father, then 20, was waiting on a troop ship in the Philippines for the order to invade Japan. The Bomb, he always said, probably saved his life. The soldiers of his 86th Infantry Division, who'd already fought their way from France to Germany, had been told that 70 percent of the U.S. invasion force might die as Japanese fighters fiercely defended their homeland. In the war stories he told me, my dad made it clear he was proud of his service, but that he had seen terrible things and that he had killed many Nazi soldiers with his mortar. Only toward the end of his life did he speak of any feelings of guilt.

Of the 90 airmen involved in the bombing missions to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, just one, Maj. Claude Eatherly, ever expressed any regrets. (See *The Last Word*.) Plagued by nightmares and shame, Eatherly sought psychiatric treatment and later be-

came a peace activist. The morality of war is a slippery subject, especially to those who do the killing; in recent years, psychologists have coined the term "moral injury" for a special kind of trauma they're seeing in veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan. Unlike PTSD, moral injury doesn't arise from fearful experiences, but from killing itself. Violating that fundamental taboo can leave soldiers haunted, and questioning whether they're still good people. Eatherly clearly suffered from moral injury, and so, in a less public way, did my dad. In his final months, left vulnerable by illnesses brought on by years of drinking, he confessed to me that he felt his suffering—and the cruel, untimely deaths of many family members over the years—was a punishment for what he'd done in the war. "I killed a lot of people, Bill," he said, quietly. I assured him that he was just a 20-year-old doing his duty amid terrible circumstances. He thanked me, but in his eyes I could see clouds of doubt.

William Falk
Editor-in-chief

NEWS

- 4 Main stories**
Coronavirus relief talks stall; Joe Biden picks Kamala Harris as his running mate; school reopenings in chaos
- 6 Controversy of the week**
Russia's plans to interfere in another presidential election
- 7 The U.S. at a glance**
Covid-19 puts college football on hold; looters hit downtown Chicago
- 8 The world at a glance**
A coronavirus comeback in Spain; China cracks down on Hong Kong
- 10 People**
Sarah Cooper lip-syncs the president; Patrick Stewart's brutal childhood
- 11 Briefing**
Mars is the focus of a new space race. What do we hope to discover on the Red Planet?
- 12 Best U.S. columns**
Good riddance to traditional political conventions; why we need the filibuster
- 15 Best international columns**
Lebanon explodes in anger after a deadly blast
- 16 Talking points**
New York state vs. the NRA; the push for another national lockdown; is the postal service in danger?



Protesting government corruption and incompetence in Beirut (p.15)

ARTS

- 22 Books**
Does America have a racial caste system?
- 23 Author of the week**
Stephenie Meyer steps inside a vampire's mind
- 24 Art & Podcasts**
Washington's new Eisenhower Memorial
- 25 Film**
Ten great flicks for family movie night



Sarah Cooper (p.10)

LEISURE

- 27 Food & Drink**
A quick and easy recipe for spicy pork kebabs; a hard seltzer for wine lovers
- 28 Coping**
Decision time for parents with school-age kids; how to stop "doomscrolling"

BUSINESS

- 32 News at a glance**
McDonald's sues its former CEO; Amazon heads to the mall
- 33 Making money**
Why the Fed wants higher inflation; buying shares of a luxury handbag
- 34 Best columns**
Trump declares war on China's WeChat app; Delta Air Lines' bad fuel bet

THE WEEK

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Federal aid lapses as negotiations break down

What happened

Tens of millions of unemployed Americans were left in limbo this week, after negotiations over a congressional relief bill collapsed and several aid-focused executive actions by President Trump faced possible legal challenges and other obstacles. Trump signed the orders after two weeks of talks between Democratic leaders and administration officials sputtered out with no agreement on a bill to extend federal unemployment supplements that lapsed July 31. “Our differences are vast,” said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, after she and Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer reached an impasse with White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. The Democrats’ starting point was a \$3.4 trillion package that extended the \$600 weekly supplements to the unemployed for six months; the administration backed a \$1 trillion bill that cut the payments down to an initial \$200 a week. The Democrats’ proposal also called for \$915 billion in aid to state and local governments facing massive budget shortfalls, which Republicans opposed. Democrats said they’d compromise on a \$2 trillion bill, a figure Meadows flatly rejected.

Trump’s executive actions would provide \$300 in weekly unemployment supplements by siphoning dollars from the federal disaster relief fund. It would also temporarily suspend collection of payroll taxes. Initially, the plan required matching \$100 state payments, a provision dropped after an outcry from cash-strapped governors. Critics questioned the legality of Trump’s orders, noted that he didn’t halt evictions, and warned that the jobless payments could take weeks to implement and that the fund would run out after five weeks. Pelosi called the measures “meager, weak, and unconstitutional,” but Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell praised Trump for acting. “Struggling Americans need action now,” he said.

The July jobs report last week showed rehiring had dramatically slowed down from June, as a coronavirus surge forced many states to tighten restrictions again. Governors called on the warring sides to return to the bargaining table and hash out a bill including a new round of \$1,200 stimulus payments and aid for businesses and schools. “They need to pull together,” said Ohio Republican Gov. Mike DeWine. But with Congress leaving Washington for August recess and Meadows also going on vacation, no new negotiations were scheduled.

What the editorials said

Congress’ failure to deliver a relief bill is “unconscionable,” said the *Houston Chronicle*. An estimated 32 million Americans are drawing unemployment, many displaced from jobs that “may never return.” While covering their rent and grocery bills, the federal payments boosted consumer spending, rescuing



Meadows, Mnuchin: No to \$2 trillion

the economy “from cratering to depths that could take decades to overcome.” Millions now face evictions; homelessness could reach Great Depression levels. It’s time to set partisanship aside and “show the American people that the government can actually get things done.”

Democrats’ demands are “unreasonable,” said *NationalReview.com*, but Trump’s actions are “an abuse of presidential authority.” His unilateral moves are an “end run” around the Constitution, which gives Congress sole power over spending. Republicans rightly objected when Obama overreached with his executive orders, and should object now to this “violation of our system.”

What the columnists said

Trump’s measures will “do little to deliver cash anytime soon” to Americans who need it, said Jim Tankersley in *The New York Times*. His use of disaster relief funds for unemployment payments “will almost certainly be challenged in court,” and Trump did nothing to help small businesses or state governments facing bankruptcy. He’s “making a political bet” that it’s better to make a show of helping the economy “than to have actually helped it.”

“Trump’s unilateral action was politically brilliant,” said Marc Thiessen in *The Washington Post*. Democrats thought they could use Americans’ wrath over lost aid to blackmail Republicans into swallowing another \$3.4 trillion in wild deficit spending. “Now the political tables are turned.” Trump will get credit for extending the relief, and any lawsuits Democrats might bring to stop it would be political suicide.

What next?

“Renters across America are wading into unknown territory,” said Kriston Capps in *Bloomberg.com*. An estimated 27 percent of Americans missed rent or mortgage payments last month, according to a survey by the U.S. Census Bureau, and a third of renters said they had “little to no confidence” they could make their August payment. And that was before federal unemployment supplements lapsed. It’s “a stark measure of the ongoing economic devastation for households stretched to the brink” by the pandemic. “Millions of Americans will lose their apartments and homes” if the federal eviction ban isn’t extended, said Binyamin Appelbaum in *The New York Times*. During the 2008 recession, “massive dislocations shredded communities,” starving businesses of customers and cities of property tax revenue. This time “the dislocations could be worse.” In a recent policy memo, a group of housing policy experts and affordable housing advocates offered a dire prediction: “The United States may be facing the most severe housing crisis in its history.”

The “obscene” Republican resistance to extending unemployment insurance “isn’t just about a few billion dollars,” said Michael Tomasky in *TheDaily Beast.com*. “It reveals the rancid core of conservative free-market economics.” A mountain of new research refutes Republicans’ assertions that the payments discourage large numbers of workers from returning to their jobs. But Republicans’ moral “horror” that a handful of Americans “might be gaming the system” outweighs the genuine desperation of millions.

Buckle up: “We’re headed into a global depression,” said Ian Bremmer in *Time.com*. With unemployment numbers “dizzily high” and Covid-19 continuing its march across the U.S. and the globe, we face “a period of economic misery that few living people have experienced.” Even a vaccine “won’t flip a switch and bring the world back to normal.” Recovery will be slow, and come in “fits and starts.” A very difficult year lies ahead.

Illustration by Howard McWilliam.
Cover photos from AP, Wikipedia, Reuters

Biden makes history with Harris VP pick

What happened

Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden this week selected California Sen. Kamala Harris as his running mate, a historic decision that makes Harris the first woman of color to run for vice president on a major-party ticket. A former San Francisco prosecutor and California attorney general, Harris battled Biden for the center lane during the Democratic primary, scoring a viral breakout in the first televised debate when she sharply criticized Biden for his opposition to mandatory busing in the 1970s. After leaving the presidential race in December, the 55-year-old Harris soon made up with Biden, 77, and began acting as a campaign surrogate for the former vice president. Biden said he partly decided to pick Harris as his running mate because of her close friendship with his late son Beau, who was attorney general of Delaware when Harris held the position in California. “There is no one’s opinion I valued more than Beau’s,” he said, “and I’m proud to have Kamala standing with me on this campaign.”

Biden noted at an event in Delaware that Harris’ background reflects a diversifying country. The daughter of immigrant academics, an Indian mother and a Jamaican father, she became only the second black woman U.S. senator in history when elected in 2016. “One of the reasons that I chose Kamala,” said Biden, “is that we both believe that we can define America simply in one word: possibilities.” In her first speech as Biden’s running mate, Harris said Americans will face a stark choice when they decide between Biden and President Trump in November: “Everything we care about—our economy, our health, our children, the kind of country we live in—it’s all on the line.”



The Democratic old and new guard?

What the columnists said

Young progressives aren’t happy with this choice, said **Jordan Weissmann** in *Slate.com*. Harris’ record as a California prosecutor—when she fought to uphold wrongful convictions—“has not aged well in the era of Black Lives Matter.” As a senator, she’s been overly chummy with Wall Street. But Harris has moved leftward in recent months, and now champions criminal justice reform, marijuana legalization, and tax credits to help lower- and middle-class families. Harris isn’t “the veep candidate of the Left’s dreams,” but she “might be a good policy influence on Biden if he treats her as a real governing partner.”

“Harris is no moderate,” said *NationalReview.com* in an editorial. During the Democratic debates, she pledged that if elected president she’d outlaw so-called assault rifles by executive order, never mind that the Constitution grants the president no such power. She briefly supported abolishing private health insurance and mandating Medicare for All, and has proposed that states should get “pre-clearance” from the federal government before changing abortion laws. That Harris might be only a heartbeat from the presidency is terrifying.

Like her politics or not, Harris’ “nomination is a turning point for Democrats,” said **Ronald Brownstein** in *TheAtlantic.com*. While the GOP remains dominated by white men—starting with Trump and Vice President Mike Pence—Biden understands that his party needs to “more closely resemble the base of voters that elects it to power.” Democrats haven’t put two white men on a presidential ticket since 2004. “It’s difficult to imagine when they ever will again.”

Schools wrestle with reopening as Covid cases mount

What happened

Teachers threatened walkouts and school districts scrambled to rewrite Covid-19 safety rules this week after hundreds of students and staff were potentially exposed to coronavirus and told to quarantine just days into the new school year. About 15 percent of American children restart school in early August, sparking ferocious debate about the danger to students on the heels of a report that 97,000 U.S. kids tested positive in the last two weeks of July alone. Georgia’s back-to-school bullishness highlighted the risk of outbreaks: In Cherokee County, 925 students and staff were ordered to quarantine, and after a student in Dallas, Ga., posted a photo of her crowded, mostly unmasked high school, six students and three staffers tested positive.

As the U.S. passed 5 million cases and 161,000 coronavirus deaths, schools made vastly different plans for outbreaks. California will let schools stay open if no more than 5 percent of students and staff test positive, which could mean dozens of cases at bigger schools. Seventeen of the country’s 20 largest K-12 districts, including Los Angeles and Chicago, plan a fully remote start to the school year, while New York City will pursue a hybrid learning system. With President Trump pressuring governors to “Open the schools!” Texas and Florida initially ordered schools to reopen, before delegating the decision to local officials. Molly Ball of Woodstock, Ga., says her two teenage sons feel unsafe at their high school. “What am I supposed to say?” Ball asked. “This is worse than I imagined, times 10.”

What the columnists said

“There are no good choices,” said **Barbara Kantrowitz** in *CNN.com*. Indefinite remote learning risks stunting students’ intellectual and social development and puts a brutal strain on parents who can’t secure child care. It hurts students with special needs, and could turn the gap between rich and poor students into “an unbridgeable chasm.” But cash-strapped schools can’t spend millions on tests, plexiglass dividers, and other safety needs, nor can students be trusted to wear masks and practice social distancing.

The American Academy of Pediatricians “strongly advocates” reopening schools, said **Rich Lowry** in *NationalReview.com*. But as states pour resources into doing that safely, teachers’ unions “have offered endless excuses why they can’t even do a simulacrum of their job.” They’re fighting against in-person *and* remote learning. As firefighters, doctors, and other essential workers bravely show up to keep the country running, teachers’ “first and last thought has been of their own interests.”

“Essential workers have every right to insist” on safeguards, said **Amy Davidson Sorkin** in *NewYorker.com*, and teachers are being ordered to risk their lives while their schools balk at making teenagers wear masks. The U.S. is unwisely emulating Israel, where school reopenings fueled an outbreak across the population. We “wasted the summer,” rushing to reopen “restaurants and shops” instead of curbing cases. Forget the fall—to reopen schools by spring, “a rapid change of course is necessary.”

Election interference: A ‘politicized’ warning?

After nearly four years of Donald Trump, Americans are “suffering from scandal fatigue,” said Max Boot in *The Washington Post*. But if we care at all about our democracy, Trump’s persistent refusal to defend our elections from Russian interference should be deeply alarming. Under pressure from Democrats, William Evanina, Trump’s director of the National Counterintelligence and Security Center, last week grudgingly admitted that Russia is again using an unspecified “range of measures” to get Trump re-elected. Democratic Sen. Richard Blumenthal, who’s been briefed on the intelligence, said Evanina’s vague warning omitted “chilling” details of Russia’s “sophisticated tactics and techniques” that apparently make its 2016 interference in Trump’s behalf “look like child’s play.” To appease Trump, Evanina also stated that China and Iran want Biden to win, said Samantha Vinograd in *CNN.com*. But are they actually interfering in the election? Evanina cited only Beijing’s public criticism of Trump’s pandemic response, and warned that Iran may spread “anti-U.S. content” online. This “false equivalency” between other nations’ preference for Biden and Russia’s “active, multipronged campaign” to re-elect Trump indicates our intelligence agencies have become “politicized.”

Evanina actually deserves some credit, said *TheDispatch.com* in an editorial. His statement was much harder on Russia than on Iran; he explicitly accused a pro-Russian Ukrainian operative—Andriy Derkach—of spreading disinformation “to undermine former Vice President Biden’s candidacy and the Democratic Party.” As for China, some experts say Beijing’s meddling campaign might simply be more “clandestine” than the brazen Russian equivalent. There’s no question that foreign adversaries are trying to “delegitimize our elections,” said Tiana Lowe in *WashingtonExaminer.com*, but



Evanina: Russia is already interfering.

so are our two political parties. With Democrats still obsessed with Russia and Republicans attacking mail-in voting, each side is building excuses to challenge a loss in November. That jeopardizes “our nation’s greatest feat:” the peaceful transition of power.

We’re losing something else we used to value, said Robert Draper in *The New York Times*: the independence of our intelligence services. From the day he took office, Trump has reacted with rage to any mention of Russian interference in the 2016 and 2020 elections. The few intelligence chiefs willing to tell him “unwanted truths”—most notably Dan Coats and Joseph Maguire—were systematically purged and replaced with unqualified Trump loyalists. The intelligence community as a whole, insiders say, now routinely edits and softens its conclusions about Russia. Officials know if they do not they will be “replaced with a more sycophantic alternative.”

It gets worse, said Jonathan Chait in *NYMag.com*. Evanina made it clear that Trump’s “Republican allies in Congress are actively cooperating” with Russia to manufacture dirt on Joe Biden. The intelligence chief said that Derkach, the Kremlin operative, is peddling the same story now being “investigated” by Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.)—that Biden’s insistence as vice president that Ukraine rid itself of corruption was a plot to protect his son Hunter’s Ukrainian employer from prosecution. Johnson’s “obvious plan” is to produce a “bombshell” report on the Bidens just before the election. The plan may not work, said Greg Sargent and Paul Waldman in *WashingtonPost.com*. Trump’s own intelligence chief has just identified the “bogus narratives” Republicans plan to use against Biden as Russian disinformation. That will make Johnson’s so-called bombshell “look a whole lot more ridiculous.”

Only in America

■ A Michigan road commissioner refused to wear a mask at a public meeting and blamed Black Lives Matter and those “n-----s in Detroit” for “taking the country away from us.” Republican Tom Eckerle refused to apologize, repeated the racial slurs, and said an African-American “is not a person whatsoever,” adding, “I can say anything I want.” He finally resigned under pressure.

■ The National Aeronautics and Space Administration will stop using “seemingly innocuous” nicknames for celestial objects that have racist or insensitive connotations. NASA said it will stop referring to planetary nebula NGC 2392 as “the Eskimo Nebula,” and to the conjoined spiral galaxies NGC 4567 and NGC 4568 as “the Siamese Twins Galaxy.” NASA said it would work with diversity experts to review all astronomical nicknames.

Good week for:

Buying a generator, after the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association warned the U.S. is facing “one of the most active hurricane seasons on record.” NOAA said there may be as many as 25 named storms and 11 hurricanes, including six that could be “major.”

Life in exile, after Prince Harry and Meghan Markle and baby Archie moved into an \$8 million home in exclusive Santa Barbara, Calif., that they bought with help from Harry’s dad, Prince Charles. Their neighbors include Ellen DeGeneres and Oprah Winfrey.

Female solidarity, after former Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin posted congratulations and advice to Democrat Kamala Harris, including “trust no one new,” “ignore deceptive ‘handlers’ trying to change you,” and “have fun!”

Bad week for:

Romance, after a British man lit hundreds of tea-light candles in his apartment, poured two glasses of wine, then went to fetch his girlfriend to propose. The couple returned to find the apartment engulfed in flames, but firefighters said she “still said YES!”

Phoenix, the warmest city in the U.S., which broke its own record for most 110-degree days in a single year, with 35 and counting, and is having its hottest summer in history.

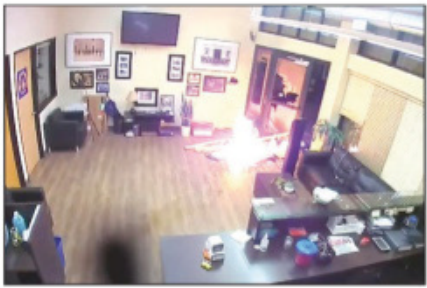
New Zealand, which had its record of 102 days without a single new coronavirus case broken when four members of a family in Auckland tested positive. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern immediately reimposed tight restrictions on the country, which has had just 1,125 confirmed cases and 22 deaths.

Pompeo warns Russia on Afghan bounties

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo rebuked his Russian counterpart over intelligence reports that Russia paid bounties for the killing of American service members in Afghanistan, despite President Trump’s insistence that allegations about the covert program are “another Russia hoax.” A report from *The New York Times* this week revealed that while the State Department has been careful not to discuss the bounties publicly, Pompeo raised the issue with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in a July 13 phone conversation. The *Times* first reported in June that a Russian military intelligence unit rewarded Taliban-linked fighters for killing American soldiers. Since then, Trump has spoken with Russia’s president, Vladimir Putin, at least twice without discussing the matter.

Portland, Ore.

Ignited: Smoke billowed through the sky as protesters set a fire in a police union hall and clashed with cops this week,



Inside the police union hall

after a brief lull following the departure of federal officers from the city. The confrontations, in which some protesters allegedly threw rocks and police used tear gas, occurred throughout the week as activists marked their 75th day of demonstrations since the death of George Floyd. Though the fire in the union hall and others in surrounding dumpsters appear to have been set by only a small number of aggressive protesters among larger groups of peaceful activists, police declared the demonstration a riot. Protesters arrested included an organizer of Portland's "Wall of Moms." One night, a pipe bomb was hurled at protesters; a former Navy SEAL was reportedly seen walking away from that attack.

Sturgis, S.D.

Born to be wild:

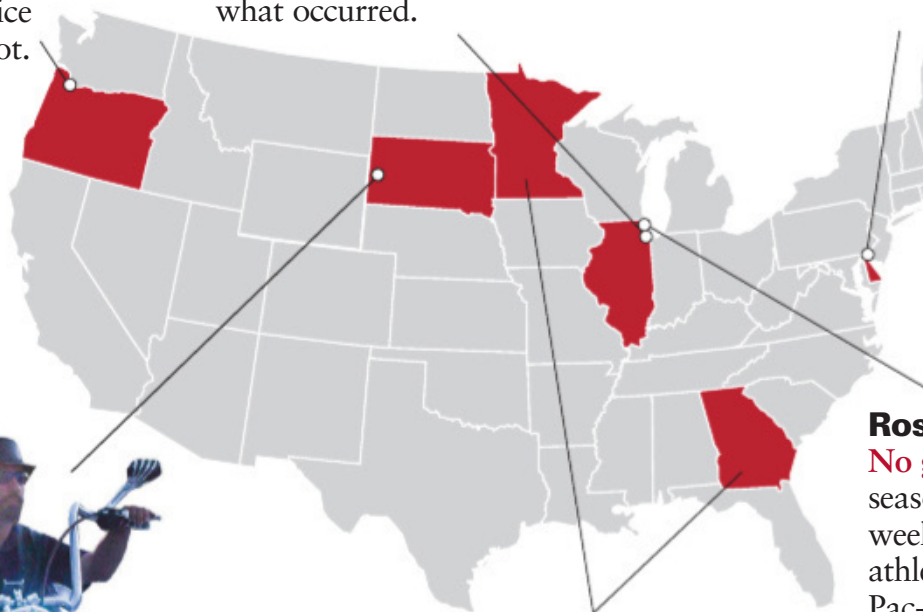
Tens of thousands of bikers began roaring into this tiny prairie town this week for the annual 10-day Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, in what promises to be the largest single mass gathering since the pandemic began. Crowds for the 250,000-person event began forming early, flouting social-distancing recommendations. At the Buffalo Chip Campground, hundreds of fans clad in leather jackets but no masks took in a Smash Mouth concert. "We're being human once again," said the lead singer, Steve Harwell, as the crowd cheered. "I don't know one person in a six-state radius who has had Covid," said Michael Brown of Lemoyne, Neb. "I think it is all just political." Meanwhile, Laura Armstrong, president of the City Council in Rapid City, 30 miles away, gave voice to residents' considerable misgivings, calling the rally "insanity."



Risky behavior

Chicago

Magnificent Mile looted: A wave of violence and vandalism swept over the city's flagship shopping district this week as hundreds of people smashed windows, overturned cash registers, and emerged from high-end stores such as Nike and Nordstrom carrying stolen goods. Some of the looters who converged on the city's "Miracle Mile" came prepared with large vehicles and even a rental truck. More than 400 police officers responded, making over 100 arrests and at one point exchanging gunfire with the crowd. Two civilians were critically wounded and 13 officers suffered injuries. The city briefly raised the bridges over the Chicago River and halted bus and train service. News of the downtown gathering spread on social media, fueled by inaccurate reports about a police shooting in Englewood, 10 miles away. South Side Alderman Raymond Lopez said he saw "no social justice component" to what occurred.

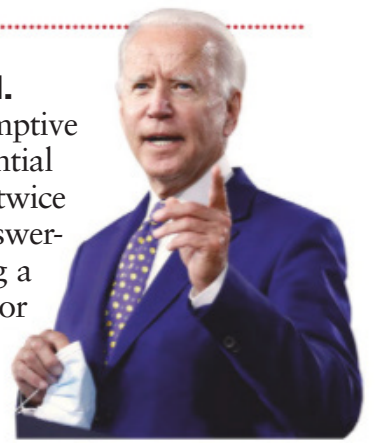


Georgia and Minnesota

Primary elections: A QAnon conspiracy theorist won the Republican Party's congressional primary runoff in a solid Republican district in Georgia this week as Democratic Rep. Ilhan Omar overcame a well-funded primary challenger in Minnesota. Marjorie Taylor Greene's victory in Georgia's 14th District almost assures she will be seated in the 117th Congress this January. She has cited theories about Deep State conspiracies and called "Q"—a mythical figure who is frequently referenced in fringe writing—a "patriot" who was "worth listening to." Greene has also warned of an Islamic "invasion" and claimed that Democratic donor George Soros, a Jewish Holocaust survivor, was a Nazi collaborator. In Minnesota's 5th District, Omar defeated Antone Melton-Meaux, who raised six times as much money with help from several pro-Israel political action committees. Omar was accused of making anti-Semitic remarks several times last year.

Wilmington, Del.

Gaffe-prone: Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden twice blundered while answering questions during a virtual convention for black and Hispanic journalists. Responding to one about engagement with Cuba, Biden, 77, said, "Unlike the African-American community, with notable exceptions, the Latino community is an incredibly diverse community with incredibly diverse attitudes about different things." He later clarified: "In no way did I mean to suggest the African-American community is a monolith—not by identity, not on issues, not at all." Biden was also asked if he had taken a cognitive test, as President Trump has claimed. "No, I haven't taken a test," Biden said. "Why the hell would I take a test?" He then compared the question to asking the reporter, who was black and from CBS, if he had taken a cocaine test before the interview, likening it to someone asking him, "Are you a junkie?"



Tongue-tied

Rosemont, Ill.

No games: America's college football season was thrown into disarray this week after two of its five most powerful athletic conferences—the Big Ten and the Pac-12—pulled the plug on fall athletics. The Illinois-based Big Ten made its announcement first, saying it hopes to make up the games during the spring semester. The Pac-12 followed shortly after with a pause on all sports until Jan. 1. Two smaller conferences—the Mid-American and Mountain West—had postponed their fall seasons as well, along with Old Dominion, which broke with its conference, USA. The Big Ten had announced its fall schedule only six days earlier. President Trump, several coaches, and star players had urged the conference to play on, with Trump noting that players had been "working too hard" to lose their season. "Our lives are changing forever right before our eyes," added Arizona offensive lineman Donovan Laie.



Not ready to play



Smuggling route

San Luis Río Colorado, Mexico

Border tunnel: U.S. authorities have discovered an unfinished and unusually sophisticated smuggling tunnel running from Mexico to the U.S. underneath the border wall. The 1,300-foot reinforced tunnel starts in a neighborhood in San Luis Río Colorado and runs to San Luis, Ariz., where it stops short just before the surface. Measuring 3 feet wide by 4 feet high, the tunnel has a railway, ventilation, water lines, and electric lights. Angel Ortiz, an agent with Homeland Security Investigations, said its builders must have

been highly skilled, because the sand in the area is very loose and most tunnels “end up caving.” The tunnel was found when agents noticed a sinkhole opening up near the border wall.

Mexico City

Fear of hospitals: Mexico’s coronavirus crisis is being worsened by a vicious cycle of self-perpetuating fear. Afraid that hospitals have become Covid-19 death wards, many Mexicans are refusing to seek care until they are so sick they are beyond saving, at which point they die within hours of arriving at the hospital. The result is that nearly 40 percent of patients hospitalized with the virus in Mexico City have died, compared with less than 25 percent of those hospitalized in New York City at the height of the pandemic. Government data shows that thousands of Mexicans are dying at home. “After seeing videos of what happens to people inside hospitals, screw that,” José Eduardo Bailón, who battled a suspected case of Covid-19 at home for 60 days, told *The New York Times*. “I’d rather stay home and die there.”

Caracas

Americans sentenced: Two former Green Berets turned mercenaries were this week sentenced to 20 years in prison for a foiled attempt to overthrow Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. Venezuelan authorities said Airan Berry, 42, and Luke Denman, 34, admitted to “crimes of conspiracy, association, illicit trafficking of weapons of war, and terrorism.” The two Americans helped train dozens of Venezuelan military defectors in Colombia before launching a poorly planned mission that was infiltrated and thwarted. They were captured on the Venezuelan coast in May and have been trophy captives ever since. In a video recording of his interrogation, Denman says he was expecting to be paid up to \$100,000 for the operation and believes President Trump backed the coup attempt. The U.S. government denies any involvement.



Berry and Denman

La Paz, Bolivia

Protests paralyze country: Bolivia’s government has called in the military to quell anti-government protests that over several weeks have brought the country to a standstill. Furious that the rerun of last year’s disputed election—which led to the downfall of leftist President Evo Morales—has been postponed three times, demonstrators have dynamited mountain passes, blocked roads with boulders and burning tires, and staged mass marches. The protests are being led by unions and indigenous and peasant groups allied with Morales’ Movement Toward Socialism party. Caretaker President Jeanine Áñez, a right-wing senator who had promised immediate elections, has delayed the vote until October because of the pandemic. Protesters fear she intends to stay in power.



Demanding a new election

Toronto

Saudi death squad? A former top Saudi Arabian intelligence officer has accused Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of sending a hit squad to Canada to kill him—just days after Saudi agents murdered and dismembered dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul in October 2018. Saad Aljabri, who was a senior aide to deposed Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef and has been living in Toronto since 2017, made the allegation in a lawsuit filed in the U.S. last week. The agents were intercepted by Canadian border officials, who found they were carrying forensic tools that could be used to dismember a corpse. The lawsuit also alleges that two of Aljabri’s adult children and his brother have been arrested in Saudi Arabia.



Aljabri



Madrid

Coronavirus returns: Spain is once again home to Europe’s largest Covid-19 outbreak, after the country this week overtook Britain to register the continent’s highest number of confirmed infections. Spain was Europe’s worst coronavirus hot spot in April, but beat the disease back with a stringent lockdown. Now, six weeks after the lockdown was lifted, it is averaging some 5,000 new cases a day, partly because a lack of qualified contact tracers is allowing the disease to spread unseen. Spain’s total case count is now above 323,000, compared with about 312,000 for the U.K. The Spanish government defended its reopening, saying most new cases are asymptomatic and hospitals are far from being overwhelmed. Cases are spiking elsewhere in Europe: France is registering some 1,640 infections a day, up from 272 in May, and has made masks mandatory in crowded outdoor areas in Paris.

Moscow

Rushed vaccine: Russia claimed victory this week in the race to develop a Covid-19 vaccine, even though it has not conducted the large-scale human trials necessary to confirm the vaccine's safety and effectiveness. Russian President Vladimir Putin said the newly approved vaccine, named Sputnik V in reference to the Soviet satellite that was the first human-made object in orbit, "works quite effectively," and that one of his adult daughters had received it. Russia has tested the vaccine on only 76 people, and no results from those trials have been released. Despite a warning from the World Health Organization last week not to skip crucial Phase 3 tests—which typically involve hundreds of thousands of people—Russian authorities say they will begin vaccinating teachers and medical workers later this month.



Is it safe?



Polluting the pristine waters

Mahébourg, Mauritius

Devastating oil spill: More than 1,100 tons of oil have leaked from a Japanese-owned ship that ran aground on a coral reef off

Mauritius, threatening the island's pristine waters and unique marine ecosystems. Fearing that MV *Wakashio* could split in two and spill all of its 4,400 tons of fuel oil, its owner, Nagashiki Shipping, deployed two tankers to pump out the remaining oil. The company said this week that the *Wakashio*'s fuel tanks are now empty. Still, the accident is an environmental disaster for Mauritius, which is a snorkeler's paradise and is heavily dependent on tourism. Residents of the Indian Ocean island have assembled homemade booms—floating barriers to contain and soak up the spilled oil—out of sugarcane leaves, plastic bottles, and human hair cut off and donated by locals.

AP (3), Constantin Film

Hong Kong

Free press under attack: Hong Kong media tycoon and pro-democracy campaigner Jimmy Lai was arrested this week on suspicion of "colluding" with foreign forces—the latest sign that China is using a sweeping new national security law to crush free expression in the semi-autonomous city. The founder of the popular tabloid *Apple Daily*, Lai was arrested at his home and later led handcuffed through the newspaper's offices as some 200 police officers searched desks and carted away stacks of documents. At least nine other people were arrested on national security charges, including Lai's two adult sons. Lai, 72, faces life in prison if convicted; he said he had no regrets about his support for pro-democracy protesters. A towering figure in the media world, Lai has met with Vice President Mike Pence, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and members of Congress.



Lai: Arrested

Taipei, Taiwan

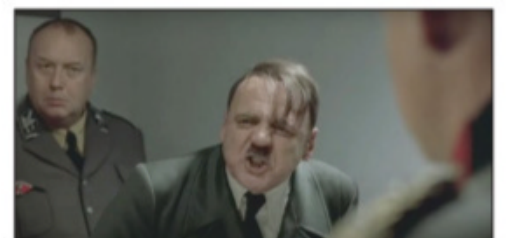
U.S. official visits: Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar this week became the highest-ranking American official to visit Taiwan since the U.S. broke formal ties with the island nation in 1979. Azar congratulated Taiwan on its success in containing the coronavirus, crediting "the open, transparent, democratic nature of Taiwan's society and culture," while he criticized China for covering up its initial outbreak in Wuhan. Taiwan's sense of security largely depends on U.S. commitments to its defense, and so the visit was a diplomatic coup for the island. Beijing, which regards Taiwan as a renegade province, emphasized its opposition to Azar's visit by sending two fighter jets toward the island before the meeting and stepping up military drills around the region.

Bangkok

Protest and backlash: Thousands of protesters, many of them university students wearing Harry Potter-themed costumes and brandishing chopsticks as wands, demonstrated against the Thai government last week with chants of "Long live democracy!" The protesters, who have been holding rallies for weeks, are demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, who seized power in a 2014 coup, and calling for new elections. Nationalists who support the government have struck back by forming their own group, the Coordination Center of Vocational Students for the Protection of National Institutions. That group's founder, Sumet Trakulwoonnoo, warned of "the danger to the nation from these people who are instigating youth to become godless and obsessed with Western culture, do drugs, and hate their parents and teachers."

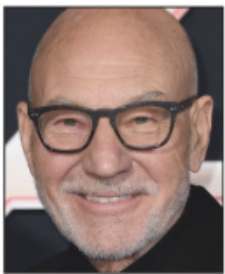
Perth, Australia

Hitler meme OK: An Australian refinery worker who was fired from his job at BP last year for sharing a meme that compared his bosses to Hitler has won his job back and been awarded \$200,000 in lost wages and compensation. Scott Tracey posted a video online that used a clip from the 2004 German-language film *Downfall*—in which Hitler rants at generals in his bunker—but with English subtitles that mocked BP officials' stance during pay negotiations. The company said Tracey improperly used a BP computer to show the video to his colleagues and defamed executives by comparing them to Nazis. Australia's Fair Work Commission disagreed. The Australian Workers' Union welcomed the ruling but said "it doesn't make up for the completely unnecessary drama and heartache Mr. Tracey has been dragged through."



Downfall: Mock away

Stewart's escape from his father



Patrick Stewart is awfully active for an 80-year-old, said Kirsty Lang in *The Times* (U.K.). Every day of the pandemic, the British actor has given inspiration to his 5 million social media followers by posting one of Shakespeare's 154 sonnets. He's also starring in the latest *Star Trek* revival, persuaded by CBS to reprise his role as the captain of the starship *Enterprise*. Acting has been a safe haven for Stewart since childhood in West Yorkshire, England, where he grew up in a home with no indoor bathroom. His mother, Gladys, worked in a textile factory while his father, Alfred, was off fighting the war. His first five years were happy, but things changed when Alfred returned. "We barely knew him," Stewart says. "He'd drink, get angry, and hit my mother. I would put my body between them to protect her." Sometimes they'd have to call the police. "We asked her to leave him, but she wouldn't," he says. "She adored him." It wasn't until 2012 that he learned that his father, a war hero, suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, what used to be called "combat fatigue." Stewart became an actor to escape his father. "The first moment that I walked onto the school stage," he says, "it was the safest place I'd ever been."

A Giant step for baseball

Alyssa Nakken is the first female coach in Major League Baseball history, said Melissa Jacobs in *The Guardian* (U.K.). Before this pandemic-shortened season began, the San Francisco Giants' new manager, Gabe Kapler, met with Nakken, 30, about an opening on his staff, and offered her a job as "assistant coach." A stunned Nakken looked at Kapler and let out a "holy s---," realizing she'd be the first woman to hold that role in MLB's 113-year history. A former All-American softball player at California State University, Sacramento, Nakken wanted to continue in sports but didn't know how. "I remember the sleepless nights of being down on myself for not being sure what I wanted to do," she says. She got a degree in sports management and took an internship with the Giants, doing whatever the team needed: crunching cutting-edge analytics, scouting opposing players, even throwing batting practice. Then Kapler offered to move her into a coaching role, even asking her during a spring-training game to coach a few innings at first base. "I love going to work," she says. The Giants players have been very supportive, and she has a big following of young female fans. "We're all role models," she says. "It's just that right now I have quite a few more eyes on me. I understand if I stay true to me, these girls, these boys, these people will be inspired by the possibilities."



Cooper, in Trump's own words

Sarah Cooper can thank Donald Trump for her sudden success, said Will Pavia in *The Times* (U.K.). Many actors and impressionists, including Alec Baldwin, have taken a crack at imitating the president's unique speaking style, but Cooper—a largely unknown comedian and Google employee—invented a new way of mocking him: Lip-syncing to a recording of the president's actual words. In her breakout video, Cooper earnestly mouthed Trump's idea of using bleach and "powerful lights" to treat Covid-19. "I was just trying to be a person suggesting these crazy things as honestly as I could do," she says. Cooper, 42, the daughter of Jamaican immigrants who came to the U.S. when she was 3, thinks that hearing Trump's own words coming from a black woman is what makes her videos funny. "I think it works because I'm a low-power, low-status person who's making fun of someone who is powerful. There's just something so satisfying about someone he disdains one-upping him." Tens of millions of people have watched her videos, but she hopes to move on to her own comedy after November. "I think whether he wins or loses, I'm done," she says. "At some point, I would like to use my own voice."

In the news

■ Liberty University President **Jerry Falwell Jr.** went on an indefinite leave of absence last week after posting an Instagram photo of himself with his pants unzipped, a beverage in one hand, and his other arm around the waist of a woman whose pants were also open. The university's executive committee asked Falwell, one of President Trump's most prominent evangelical backers, to go on leave. Falwell, 58, claimed the woman was his wife's assistant, and

since she couldn't close her pants because she was pregnant, he opened his, too. "I promised my kids I will try to be a good boy from here on out," he added. Falwell has suffered a series of embarrassments: He and his wife traveled with and lent \$1.8 million to a 21-year-old pool boy they met at the Fontainebleau Hotel in Miami Beach; Trump's former fixer Michael Cohen has said he helped Falwell conceal sexually explicit photos of Falwell and his wife; and in May, Falwell tweeted a photo of a man in blackface and another in a Ku Klux Klan outfit.

■ **Simon Cowell** required six hours of emergency surgery last week after falling off a new electric bicycle and breaking his back in three places. The *America's Got Talent* judge, 60, fell backward while riding behind his Malibu, Calif., house and narrowly missed

severing his spinal cord, the *New York Post* reported. Cowell quipped after surgery, "If you buy an electric trail bike, read the manual before you ride it for the first time."

■ Comedian **Jeff Ross** asked to be the "boyfriend" of a 15-year-old girl when he was 33, the woman, Jessica Radtke, told *NYMag.com* last week. Radtke says Ross, now 54, winked at her outside a New York comedy club in 1999. On their first date, she said, Ross repeatedly said, "I can't believe you're only 15" before allegedly having sex with her. Seven people confirmed they knew of the relationship, including Radtke's father. Ross, best known for appearing at Comedy Central roasts, called the allegations "absolutely not true." Ross' friend, fellow comedian Amy Schumer, said, "He always has alarmingly young-looking girlfriends."

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A mania for Mars

Three countries just launched unmanned missions to the Red Planet in hopes of finding evidence of life. Why the fascination with Mars?

Who's going to Mars?

The United Arab Emirates kicked off a trio of missions with the July 19 launch of its orbiter, Hope. China followed four days later with Tianwen-1 (literally “Questions to Heaven”), a three-pronged mission that includes a lander, a rover, and an orbiter. NASA concluded the fireworks on July 30 with Perseverance, designed to put the largest, most sophisticated rover yet on Mars. Each of the new missions will arrive at Mars in February, with both NASA and China looking for evidence that there is current microbial life under the surface or that such life once existed there. Such a finding would be “extraordinary” and indicate life may exist in many other places in the universe, said Dr. Sarah Johnson, a planetary scientist at Georgetown University. In a memoir called *Sirens of Mars*, Johnson writes about how the search for life on the planet inspired her to become a planetologist. Mars, she writes, has long been humanity’s “mirror, our foil, a telltale reflection of what has been deepest in our hearts. Mars has been a blank canvas. And tenderly, our human seeking has rushed to fill it.”

What is so interesting about Mars?

The fourth planet from the sun is more like Earth than any of the others. It's about half our planet's size, has variable seasons, polar ice caps, and plains and gullies possibly shaped by water flow.

“All of that,” said David Weintraub, a professor of astronomy at Vanderbilt University, “made it easy for us to tell ourselves that life was likely to have emerged there.” At the same time, its relative proximity—in October, it will swing to within 38.6 million miles of Earth—has made it seem within reach of a space mission. The interest in Mars was ignited in 1877, when the Italian astronomer Giovanni Schiaparelli noted a series of mysterious lines seemingly etched into the Martian surface. He described them as *canali*, which literally means “channels” but was mistranslated into “canals,” carrying the hint they had been constructed by intelligent life. The idea was seized upon some 20 years later by the influential American astronomer Percival Lowell, who theorized that the canals were created by an ancient, dying civilization to channel water as the Martian surface dried into the red desert it is today. The canals “run for thousands of miles in an unswerving direction, as far relatively as from London to Bombay,” Lowell wrote. Later, the lines were proved to be nothing more than an optical illusion.



The planet most like Earth: Mars as seen by NASA's Curiosity rover

Which nation got there first?

In July 1965, NASA achieved the first successful fly-by with a craft called Mariner 4. During ensuing decades, the U.S. and the Soviet Union periodically dispatched orbiters and landers to the planet. During the late 1990s, NASA's Mars Global Surveyor discovered dry riverbeds and evidence of glacial activity—suggesting that water once existed in abundance on Mars. Since water is associated with life, the finding reignited interest in Mars; in subsequent years, the U.S., Russia, China, and other nations sent nearly 20 missions there. NASA's Curiosity rover has been exploring the planet since 2012.

Have we found life?

No, although the question isn't without controversy. The 1976 NASA mission discovered four samples that registered as positive for microbial respiration, but a subsequent test found no signs of organic matter. Most scientists attribute the positives to a quirk of soil chemistry. Still, Curiosity has found evidence of organic compounds hinting at the past or current presence of microbial life. There is hope that Perseverance may finally settle the question. It carries equipment to search for the biological signatures of life, and the rover will drill into the Martian soil and eventually send samples back to Earth. “The goal,” said NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine, “is to discover life on another world.”

The challenge of landing safely

Landing a manned spaceship on Mars will be extremely difficult. The planet's atmosphere is about 100 times thinner than Earth's, making it considerably harder to slow a craft while it hurtles toward the surface at an estimated speed of 13,000 miles per hour. Unmanned landers have overcome this hurdle by using parachutes and inflatables that enable the craft to bounce rather than crash, but current technology doesn't allow for larger, heavier manned craft to land safely this way. Since landing on Mars with the weight of sufficient fuel for a return journey is impractical, NASA has plans for a craft it calls the Mars Ascent Vehicle (MAV). This vehicle will be sent to Mars ahead of time without any fuel, so that it is light enough to land. The MAV would then create its own fuel by squeezing oxygen from the carbon dioxide-heavy Martian atmosphere. Once astronauts land on the planet, NASA's plan calls for them to get aboard the fully self-fueled MAV, launch from the surface, dock with an orbiting craft, and then journey back to Earth.

When will humans go?

NASA's timeline calls for a crewed mission to the moon by 2024, a lunar base by 2028, and flights from the moon base to Mars sometime in the 2030s. SpaceX is planning uncrewed missions to Mars about two years from now; if all goes well, says SpaceX CEO Elon Musk, he may launch a manned mission in 2024. But manned missions still face huge obstacles. On a one-way, five- to 10-month journey to Mars through space, astronauts would be bombarded with so much radiation, it could cause cancer, affect their vision, and even disrupt their central nervous systems. “As it stands today, we can't go to Mars, due to radiation,” said physicist Marco Durante. “It would be impossible to meet acceptable dose limits.” Scientists also worry about the impact on humans of a prolonged period of reduced gravity and isolation. Musk says the first travelers to Mars must be “prepared to die” on the Red Planet. Still, he said, “it would be an incredible adventure.”

Conventions without the pretense

Doyle McManus
Los Angeles Times

“Goodbye to traditional political conventions,” said Doyle McManus, “and good riddance.” The pandemic has made it impossible this year for Democrats and Republicans to stage the four nights of hoopla that precedes every presidential election. The conventions can finally be honest about being “slickly produced infomercials,” instead of the authentic gatherings of yore where political bosses and unruly armies of delegates chose presidential nominees. With the candidates and delegates at home, both parties can focus on producing a more watchable TV show. The Democrats, whose convention begins Monday, will seek to reintroduce presidential nominee Joe Biden to the voters with a glossy biopic that delves into his middle-class roots, his family tragedies, his decades in Congress, and his eight years as Barack Obama’s vice president. In his speech, Biden will try to dispel Trump’s claim that the 77-year-old is “mentally shot.” At their virtual convention, starting Aug. 24, Republicans will lay out plans for President Trump’s second term, including rebuilding the pandemic-ravaged economy while focusing on “radical elements” they say will control Biden. The spectacle of past conventions will be gone, “but the vast majority of voters won’t miss a thing.”

A ‘blue shift’ is likely in November

David Graham
TheAtlantic.com

The “blue shift” may decide the presidential election, said David Graham. In recent races, Democrats have benefited from a large wave of provisional ballots counted after the polls closed—sometimes, changing which candidate won. In the 2018 midterm elections, blue-shift votes tallied after Election Day gave Democrat Kyrsten Sinema a U.S. Senate race in Arizona and helped Democrats win 41 House seats nationally. Amid the pandemic, tens of millions of additional votes will be cast by mail in November, but President Trump has convinced many Republicans that mail-in ballots are tainted. This could lead to a massive blue shift in mail-in votes—and a “catastrophic” challenge to the results. Let’s say that when polls close, President Trump holds a narrow lead in one or more swing states that would give him an Electoral College majority. He’ll declare victory. But as mail-in votes are tallied over days and even weeks, Biden emerges as the clear winner in those swing states. Trump “cries fraud and insists that he’s the target of a criminal Democratic coup.” The country would be plunged into chaos. Unless one candidate wins by a landslide, “Election Day will be more like Election Week or Election Month this year.”

The danger of eliminating the filibuster

Bill Scher
RealClearPolitics.com

If Democrats win the White House and the Senate, should they eliminate the filibuster? asked Bill Scher. Former President Obama recently called on his party to get rid of that U.S. Senate tradition, so Democrats could push through sweeping legislative changes with 51 Senate votes. Under current rules, either party can block legislation by invoking the filibuster and requiring 60 votes to resume debate—an important check on the party in power. Many Democrats say that without the filibuster, the party could add Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico as states, giving Democrats four additional senators and a majority for years to come. But this shortsighted idea would lead to an escalating “arms race” in altering the rules: “When Republicans return to power, as they eventually would,” they could divide Republican states in half to create even more states and senators. Anything the Democrats had achieved in the majority would be reversed, with the country veering back and forth between partisan extremes. In the book *How Democracies Die*, Harvard professors Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt warn that “acts of constitutional hardball” can erase all norms and lead to “politics without guardrails.” Without guardrails, our system of government may go off a cliff.

Viewpoint

“How did it come to this? A virus a thousand times smaller than a dust mote has humbled and humiliated the planet’s most powerful nation. America has failed to protect its people, leaving them with illness and financial ruin. It has lost its status as a global leader. While countries as different as South Korea, Thailand, Iceland, Slovakia, and Australia acted decisively to bend the curve of infections downward, the U.S. achieved merely a plateau in the spring, which changed to an appalling upward slope in the summer. The breadth and magnitude of its errors are difficult, in the moment, to truly fathom.”

Ed Yong in *TheAtlantic.com*

It must be true... I read it in the tabloids

■ A British municipal worker whose phone accidentally played pornography during a staff meeting has been fired after claiming the moaning noises were, in fact, made by a goose. About 100 people at the meeting broke into awkward laughter when David West, an electrician for the Redditch Borough Council, opened a video of a woman making loud “sexual moans,” which continued for 30 seconds while he frantically tapped the phone. When bosses confronted him, West insisted the deleted video had shown a “goose honking.” Colleagues disputed his story. “I know the sound of a goose,” said one, “and it wasn’t [that].”

■ A team of Czech scientists has assigned a robot to write a performable stage play by January 2021. Researcher Rudolf Rosa of Charles University in Prague said the intention of his team’s effort is to honor the *R.U.R.*, or *Rossum’s Universal Robots*, a 1921 play credited with originating the term “robot.” “One hundred years ago, a man wrote a theater play about robots,” Rosa said. “What if today, robots wrote a theater play about men?” His team has partnered with some stage professionals, and Rosa said the January premiere of the robot-conceived production is “clear and fixed.”

■ Nearly 200 Rhode Island taxpayers received refund checks signed by Mickey Mouse. The checks have the name of the famous cartoon character over a line identifying him as the state’s “General Treasurer.” Walt Disney’s name also appears on the checks as the “State Controller,” in script that looks like Disney’s real signature. The Department of Revenue has apologized and attributed the incident to a “technical error.”



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NETHERLANDS

Dairy farmers don't deserve our sympathy

Nico Hoogland
De Volkskrant

Dutch farmers have been staging protests for months, snarling up traffic with convoys of tractors, said Nico Hoogland. They're demanding the government drop a proposal that would cut the amount of protein in dairy cows' feed, a measure intended to reduce levels of nitrous oxide—a greenhouse gas—in the animals' manure. Farmers say removing the extra protein will reduce milk yields and even harm the animals' health. But as a former veterinarian, I have to ask: Since when do farmers care about livestock health? Many dairy cows have to be euthanized because of infected udders and hooves, the result of being kept in filthy conditions.

And farmers know full well that feeding protein is a way of squeezing every drop of milk a cow can possibly produce. It does nothing for the animals; in fact, it harms their digestive systems. Many dairy cows have to “undergo surgery on a twisted stomach” and “suffer constant diarrhea” as a result of this diet. No wonder most Dutch people don't support these protests. Factory farmers get huge subsidies despite the environmental damage they cause, yet now they demand the right to keep abusing their animals? Plenty of small-scale livestock holders farm responsibly. Those who choose not to do so can hardly expect to win public sympathy.

SPAIN

Post-lockdown crime spree is here

Jennifer Creaser
TheLocal.es

As Spanish society emerges from lockdown, the criminals are venturing out, too, said Jennifer Creaser. Last year, Barcelona was “in the midst of a crime wave,” with “an alarming rise in street robberies” of tourists. A visiting South Korean government official was even killed in a vicious mugging. Coronavirus travel bans and warnings have emptied the city of tourists, and so criminal gangs are now targeting Spaniards. Robbers are picking on elderly people and women, stealing jewelry, cellphones, and wallets. These pickpockets are professionals, repeat offenders well known to the police. Yet because of a quirk of Spanish law, they can't be locked up. Stealing

something worth less than \$475 is a misdemeanor that brings only a small fine, and even multiple offenses don't rise to the level of a crime. That's why “gangs of pickpockets appear so brazen, often working the same beat with no need to even hide themselves.” Before the pandemic, violent muggers also routinely evaded conviction because their tourist victims often flew home before a trial could begin, and so they couldn't identify their attacker in person as required by the law. Now that the victims are locals, they can attend trials and help ensure their attackers are put away. By the time tourists return to Barcelona en masse, we hope “the streets will be safer.”

Belarus: Rigged election sparks a national revolt

The people of Belarus are rising up against their dictator, said *The Times* (U.K.) in an editorial. Thousands of demonstrators swarmed the streets of Minsk to protest “blatant ballot rigging” in this week's presidential election, braving riot police who blasted the crowds with stun grenades and rubber bullets and dragged thousands of citizens away to jail. Belarus' election was a farce from start to finish. President Alexander Lukashenko, who has ruled the former Soviet republic with an iron fist since 1994, arrested or barred from running all three main opposition leaders. So the wife of one challenger, Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, ran in her husband's place. She drew large crowds at campaign events, but it was a foregone conclusion that the vote count would not be fair. While opposition exit polls suggested she had won, the official tally gave Lukashenko a landslide 80 percent to Tikhanovskaya's 10 percent. “All the indications are that the vote was rigged.” Belarusians are “now calling for liberty,” and the West should stand with them.

But Tikhanovskaya has already fled the country, said Christina Hebel in *Der Spiegel* (Germany). When she went to the election commission to challenge the results, Tikhanovskaya was detained for seven hours and told that her jailed husband would be harmed and that she would be imprisoned—leaving her two children orphans—if she continued campaigning. Authorities released an obviously staged video in which Tikhanovskaya, 37, reads from a sheet and “warns people not to continue demonstrating.” Another, more emotional video was uploaded to her



Pro-democracy protesters confront the police in Minsk.

husband's YouTube channel, in which she apologizes to the people for leaving them and talks of her children. Belarusian security forces took her to the border and she claimed asylum in neighboring Lithuania. She was clearly “subjected to pressure,” said Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Linkevicius. “All videos made in detention are dubious.” Tikhanovskaya was in over her head, said Petras Vaitiekunas in *Lietuvos Rytas* (Lithuania). She's “not a resistance leader,” but a housewife who became “a random symbol” of the opposition. It's unlikely that she will lead a government in exile.

Still, Tikhanovskaya and her supporters “have already changed the country,” said Daniel Brössler in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (Germany). “Against an overpowering state apparatus, despite the grotesquely unfair conditions in the election campaign and regardless of a campaign of intimidation, they succeeded in awakening the spirits of Belarusian society.” Nobody can know the true vote count, but “the excessive brutality with which Lukashenko's henchmen tried to crush the protests” would indicate that he lost—and lost badly. Russian President Vladimir Putin, Lukashenko's patron, will surely keep the Belarusian tyrant in power, given his “deep fear of democracy succeeding” in any neighboring country. But the European Union still has a role: It must reinstate the sanctions against Belarus that were lifted in 2016 when Lukashenko released political prisoners. And Brussels must do all it can to “prevent further bloodshed.”

Lebanon: A deadly blast and an explosion of anger

Lebanon has erupted in fury at its inept and corrupt government, said **Émilie Sueur** in *L'Orient-Le Jour* (Lebanon).

The people blame the entire establishment for the massive explosion at Beirut's port last week, which left more than 200 people dead and injured thousands more. Authorities had long known that 3,000 tons of the highly explosive fertilizer ammonium nitrate—unloaded from an unseaworthy Russian ship in 2014—were being stored at the port in defiance of safety and logic. Yet they did nothing, and when a fire ignited the warehouse, the fertilizer detonated with the force of a nuclear blast, flattening buildings and throwing debris across the city. Now the Lebanese “have let their rage explode.” Thousands of protesters chanting “The people demand the fall of the regime!” pelted the parliament building with rocks, battling riot police who bombarded them with tear gas and rubber bullets. “When some demonstrators left, their eyes and lungs burnt, others arrived, determined to take over, to keep the streets black with people.” Six days after the tragedy, Prime Minister Hassan Diab and his entire cabinet announced their resignation.

Getting rid of the government is just the start, said *An-Nahar* (Lebanon) in an editorial. The technocratic Diab took office in January after weeks of mass anti-corruption protests brought down the previous government of Prime Minister Saad Hariri. During Diab's seven months at the helm, the Lebanese currency cratered, leaving many people penniless, and Covid-19 ravaged the land as the government failed to provide reliable water or



Demanding change on the streets of Beirut

electricity. Diab says his cabinet “fought valiantly” but was defeated by “an apparatus of corruption bigger than the state.” That is what must be torn down: the “failed political system” that apportions power among various Muslim and Christian sects, encouraging each to loot the state and bestow favors on their own constituents. The leader of Lebanon's former colonial ruler agrees, said **Walid Safi** in *An-Nahar*. As our politicians hid from the angry crowds, it was French President Emmanuel Macron who strode among the rubble

of Beirut, comforting the people and promising international aid. “Lebanon needs a new political system, fundamental reforms, and a solution to its economic problems,” Macron said, “as well as an international investigation into the disaster.”

The Lebanese are murderously angry at all the ruling factions, said **Sélim Nassib** in *Libération* (France), but particularly at Hezbollah. The Shiite militia and political party took control of the port years ago so that it could smuggle in Iranian weapons. Lebanon imports almost all of its food and goods, and so the supposed “Party of God” has made “very substantial profits” from the port. Reform is almost impossible from within, because Lebanon's Christian president, Michel Aoun, has made an alliance with Hezbollah to safeguard his own political interests. If foreign powers really want to help this crippled country, they must ensure that no aid flows to Hezbollah or the corrupt government. We can rely only on civic groups—and the generosity of the world.

PAKISTAN

The next great war will happen in Asia

Rehman Malik
The Nation

“The West wants to stage World War III from South Asia,” said Rehman Malik, and it has found a tool in Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The recent skirmish on India and China's Himalayan border occurred because “Modi is under great pressure from the West to create a war zone with China.” His soldiers received an “unforgettable thrashing,” and Modi backed down. But the clash has exposed how fear of a rising China is dividing the world into two camps. On one side are the U.S., India, Israel, and Southeast Asian countries such as South Korea and Vietnam. On the other are China, Russia, Pakistan, and Iran. Washington's

priority is to shut off Beijing's access to foreign markets. That's why the U.S. has reportedly asked the Indian navy to police the Strait of Malacca—the main shipping channel between the Indian and Pacific Oceans—and turn back Chinese vessels. Closing that passage would make China dependent on Pakistan's Gwadar port, which sits opposite the Arabian Peninsula. China could transport goods overland to and from that port, which is why the U.S. and India are so opposed to Chinese investment in Gwadar. As a nuclear state, Pakistan “cannot remain isolated if this war erupts.” We would “have no choice except to be on the side of China.”

SOUTH KOREA

Is it art or political provocation?

Sarah Kim
JoongAng Daily

Japanese officials are furious over a South Korean artwork that they regard as national insult, said Sarah Kim. In late July, the Korea Botanic Garden in Pyeongchang unveiled a pair of statues titled *A Heartfelt Apology*. One bronze depicts a seated girl, representing the tens of thousands of so-called comfort women who were forced to provide sex to invading Japanese soldiers during World War II. The other statue is of a Japanese man who bears a strong resemblance to current Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, kneeling in a low bow before the girl. (The garden's owner denies it represents Abe.) The work was commissioned in 2016, shortly after the

two countries clinched a deal meant to resolve the wartime sexual slavery issue. Under its terms, Japan apologized and set up a \$9.5 million fund for the surviving victims. But victims' groups criticized the agreement, which did not establish Japan's legal responsibility for its war crimes and which stipulated that a statue honoring comfort women—placed provocatively in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul—must be removed. Japan's chief cabinet secretary, Yoshihide Suga, called the alleged depiction of Abe “unacceptable on the basis of international courtesy” and warned that it will “have a decisive impact on Japan–South Korea relations.”

Noted

■ A man infected with the coronavirus spread it to 53 others at an Ohio church service in June, leading to at least 91 total infections as the churchgoers passed it to others in the community. "It spread like wildfire," said Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine. "Very, very scary." *CNN.com*

■ Financial problems worsened by the coronavirus pandemic have caused the sudden and permanent closure of 140 Roman Catholic schools across the country, leaving parents scrambling for alternatives. Church leaders are warning that, without federal aid, hundreds more schools will close. *Associated Press*



■ A White House aide reached out to South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem to ask about the process for adding an additional presidential face to Mount Rushmore, after President Trump told Noem he dreamed of being added to the monument. Trump denied the report, but said, "sounds like a good idea to me!"

The New York Times

■ Democratic PACs supporting Joe Biden have outspent Trump-backing PACs by nearly 3 to 1 since last spring. Pro-Biden groups have booked more than \$70 million worth of TV slots between now and November, compared with just \$42 million from Trump supporters. "We are getting clobbered," said Republican donor Dan Eberhart, citing an "enthusiasm gap among Super PAC donors." *Politico.com*

The NRA: Should it be disbanded?

The National Rifle Association is facing "its worst nightmare: accountability," said **Shannon Watts** in *USA Today*. New York Attorney General Letitia James filed a lawsuit last week seeking to dissolve the nonprofit gun group, calling it "a breeding ground for greed, abuse, and brazen illegality." An 18-month probe revealed how the NRA's



LaPierre: Italian suits and private jets

leaders, especially CEO Wayne LaPierre, turned the 150-year-old organization into "a personal piggy bank" while spending less than 10 percent of funds on gun safety and training. Instead, the New York state-chartered organization allegedly used charitable gifts for private jets, Italian suits, African safaris, lavish European vacations, luxury black-car services, and \$18,000 in family wedding expenses. All told, corrupt executives allegedly squandered \$64 million over three years. "Perhaps more responsible than any other group or individual for America's deadly gun-violence epidemic," the NRA "had this reckoning coming."

LaPierre's "rock star-style" spending "looks fishy," said **Kevin Williamson** in *NationalReview.com*, but the attempt to break up the NRA itself is a "political jihad." James once called the NRA a "terrorist organization," and this lawsuit is "a clear abuse of prosecutorial power." For all of the

NRA's questionable spending, said **Jonathan Turley** in *TheHill.com*, "it is, by any measure, one of the most successful advocacy groups in our history," with more than 5 million members and a remarkable record of defeating gun-control legislation and candidates from either party it deems unfriendly to gun rights. James may now be a liberal "hero," but she hunted the NRA only because it serves its members so effectively.

As much as I "loathe" the NRA, said **Ruth Marcus** in *The Washington Post*, dissolving it would be a mistake, even if allegations of LaPierre's "jaw-dropping greed" are true. "The NRA has a First Amendment right to its misguided understanding of the Second," and James surely would not attempt to disband the ACLU or Planned Parenthood over similar financial mismanagement. Liberals give the NRA too much credit, anyway, said **Bill Scher** in *Politico.com*. Even if the group is weakened by litigation, "about 43 percent of Americans will still live in gun-owning households." With or without the NRA, a "fervent gun-rights culture" will persist. If Democrats want more stringent gun control, they'll have to explicitly run on that issue, persuade a critical mass of voters, and get "a mandate for action."

The pandemic: Is another lockdown necessary?

To get the coronavirus pandemic under control, America needs go back under lockdown, said **Dr. Michael Osterholm** and **Neel Kashkari** in *The New York Times*. The virus is now spreading rapidly across the country, and when fall and winter's cold weather drives people indoors, where the virus spreads more easily, it could bring on an even "greater catastrophe," with more than 1 million deaths. Many states reopened bars, restaurants, and other businesses "well before the virus was under control." Other nations were more patient, bent the curve way down, and have largely returned to normal life. America continues to flail, with more than 50,000 new cases every day. "Six to eight weeks," said the *Times* in an editorial. That's how long public health experts say it would take to get the pandemic under control if we instituted strict lockdowns in hard-hit areas, made better use of testing data, and had "clear, consistent messaging" to the public. "Just because America has largely bungled these steps so far doesn't mean it can't turn things around."

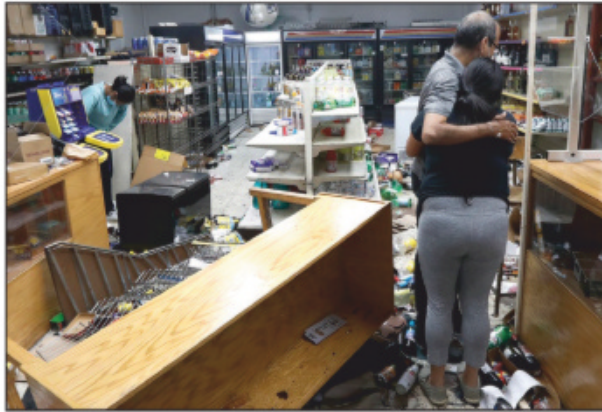
Another lockdown would be "a catastrophe" for the economy, said *The Wall Street Journal* in an editorial. The havoc wrought by the first round of lockdowns is evident everywhere: a

nearly 33 percent annualized decline in second-quarter GDP, "the worst ever recorded," 40 million unemployed, and trillions added to the federal debt. And for what? The virus is still rampaging, proving once and for all that "the lockdown-as-miracle cure is a fantasy." Americans "are drained of their economic and emotional reserves," said **Faye Flam** in *Bloomberg.com*. Instead of another broad lockdown, public officials need to limit "high-risk" activities like large indoor gatherings and to steer citizens to low-risk activities, like eating at outdoor restaurants. Mask wearing should be strongly encouraged. That way, people can minimize their risk of infection "while still leading lives worth living."

The choice is not one "between perpetual anxiety and freedom," said **Jennifer Nuzzo** in *The Boston Globe*. France, Germany, and many other countries all found a way out. They did the hard work of driving infection rates down with lockdowns, and then implemented national testing and contact-tracing strategies that have resulted in "low levels of infections and safely reopened schools, businesses, and entertainment." If America doesn't do the same, we're just going to be stuck in what seems like a "bad, recurring dream." *AP (2)*

Police: A growing opposition to ‘defunding’

Calls to defund the police department in New York City have hit a roadblock, said **Jeffery Mays** in *The New York Times*: opposition from the black community. An effort spearheaded by white progressives on the City Council to cut the police budget by \$1 billion and reduce the number of officers on the street has met resistance from col-



Chicago store owners clean up after a looting.

leagues representing communities of color, at a time when New York and other U.S. cities face a soaring number of shootings and homicides. Vanessa Gibson, a black Democrat from the Bronx, said her constituents object to the use of excessive force but “want to see cops in the community. They want to be safe.” Mayor Ras Baraka of Newark, N.J., called defunding the police a “bourgeois liberal” solution for addressing systemic racism. A recent Gallup poll found that only 19 percent of black Americans want to see fewer police officers in their communities, while 81 percent want the same number or more.

Of course we do, said **Charles Love** in *City Journal*. “My black friends, relatives, and neighbors are neither conservatives nor strong supporters of law enforcement, but none supports defunding the police.” The kind of violent crime now on the

rise hits black communities the hardest, and white liberal mayors were too quick to accede to Black Lives Matter protesters’ demands. The truth is that defunding or abolishing the police “was always an absurd idea, politically and practically,” said **Jonah Goldberg** in *The Baltimore Sun*. But it’s been pushed by an “elite media” very distant from black people’s real lives.

It’s a bit more complicated than that, said **John Eligon** in *The New York Times*. Ask residents of Minneapolis’ majority-black North Side and you’ll find decidedly conflicted views on the City Council’s push to remake the police force. “Residents complain of rampant police mistreatment, but also of out-of-control crime and violence.” Advocates of defunding say that having fewer cops would allow the city to invest more resources in the community, to alleviate poverty and treat drug addiction and mental illness. But Taona Mays, 24, who was recently wounded in a random shooting, is among those who are unconvinced. With fewer cops on the streets, she said, “people definitely will do just anything.” Her conclusion: “It’s good to have good police. It’s bad to have bad police.”

Postal service: Slowing down the mail

President Trump’s new postmaster general is “wrecking the post office”—maybe on purpose, said **Michael Hiltzik** in the *Los Angeles Times*. Since his appointment in May, Louis DeJoy, a 63-year-old former shipping executive and major Trump donor, has reassigned 23 experienced senior managers and centralized power around himself, restricted overtime, and instituted a new policy that late-arriving mail doesn’t need to be delivered until the following day. Mail is now piling up at distribution centers around the country and arriving, in some places, as much as three weeks late. Alarmed Democratic lawmakers, concerned over the fate of the 2020 election, last week summoned DeJoy to Capitol Hill to explain the slowdown. There, in a closed-door meeting later described as a “heated discussion,” he confirmed his intent to cut costs and run the United States Postal Service like a business, instead of an essential service. For years, Trump has wanted to take a wrecking ball to the postal service simply because it has a big contract to make “last-mile” deliveries for Amazon, whose owner, Jeff Bezos, also owns the hated *Washington Post*.

“This is a democratic emergency,” said **Kristen Clarke** in *USAToday.com*. With the pandemic

making in-person voting risky, “the outcome of the November presidential election will almost certainly be decided by mail-in votes.” About two-thirds of states already won’t accept mail-in ballots that arrive after Election Day, so Trump and DeJoy’s decision to slow-walk the mail could turn out to be “among the most consequential policy decisions of the 2020 election.”

These claims are just “conspiratorial noise,” said **Tobias Hoonhout** in *NationalReview.com*. The Post Office has needed financial reform for years. As the Government Accountability Office noted in a damning multiyear audit completed in May, the agency has accumulated \$119 billion in unfunded pension and health liabilities, with its powerful unions blocking fiscal reform. DeJoy’s effort to impose some cost-saving sanity on the chaos shouldn’t be twisted into election rigging. The USPS could no doubt be more efficient, said **Ben Mathis-Lilley** in *Slate.com*, but its unique mission—to promptly deliver the mail to every street and dirt road in the country—conflicts with the corporate world’s profit incentive. And now is a strange time to radically change how the mail is delivered, given that a “mail-reliant national election” is looming.

Wit & Wisdom

“No mockery in this world ever sounds to me so hollow as that of being told to cultivate happiness. What does such advice mean? Happiness is not a potato.” **Charlotte Brontë**, quoted in *The Sunday Times (U.K.)*

“Money is mourned with deeper sorrow than friends or kindred.” **Roman poet Juvenal**, quoted in *Lapham’s Quarterly*

“One thing a person cannot do, no matter how rigorous his analysis or heroic his imagination, is to draw up a list of things that would never occur to him.” **Economist Thomas Schelling**, quoted in the *Harvard Political Review*

“We suffer into knowledge.” **Ancient Greek playwright Aeschylus**, quoted in *The New York Times*

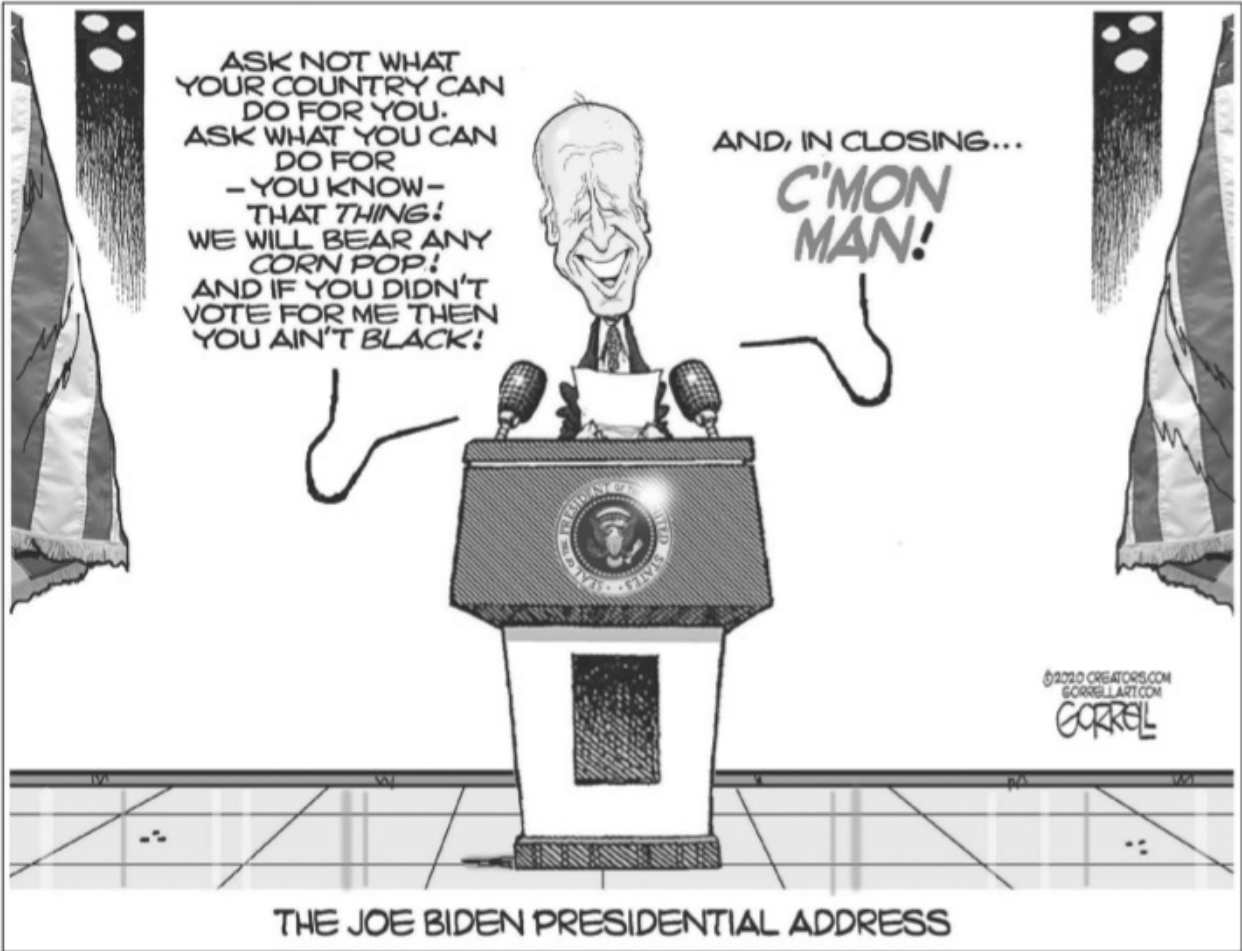
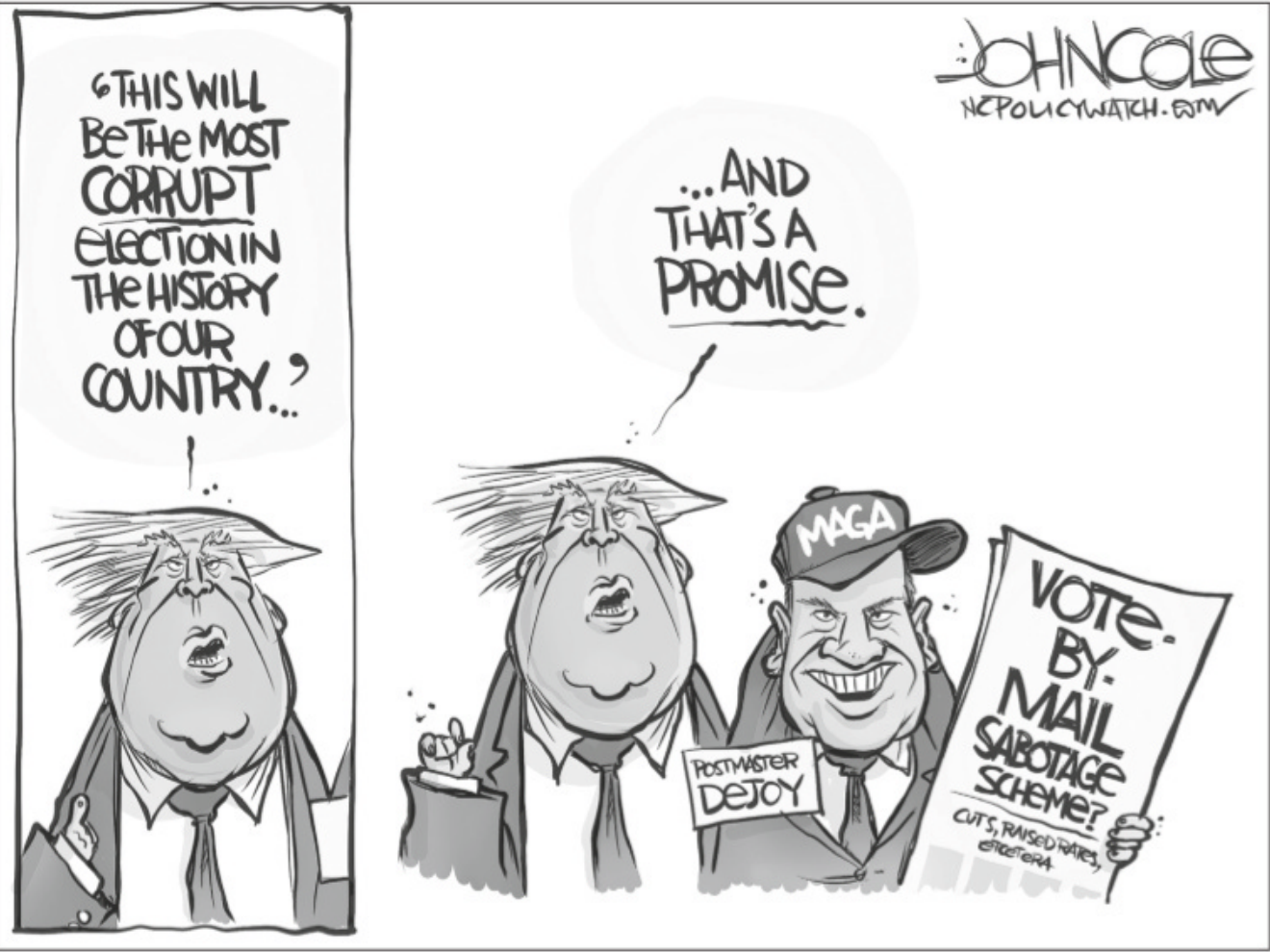
“A marriage is always made up of two people who are prepared to swear that only the other one snores.” **Author Terry Pratchett**, quoted in the *Montreal Gazette*

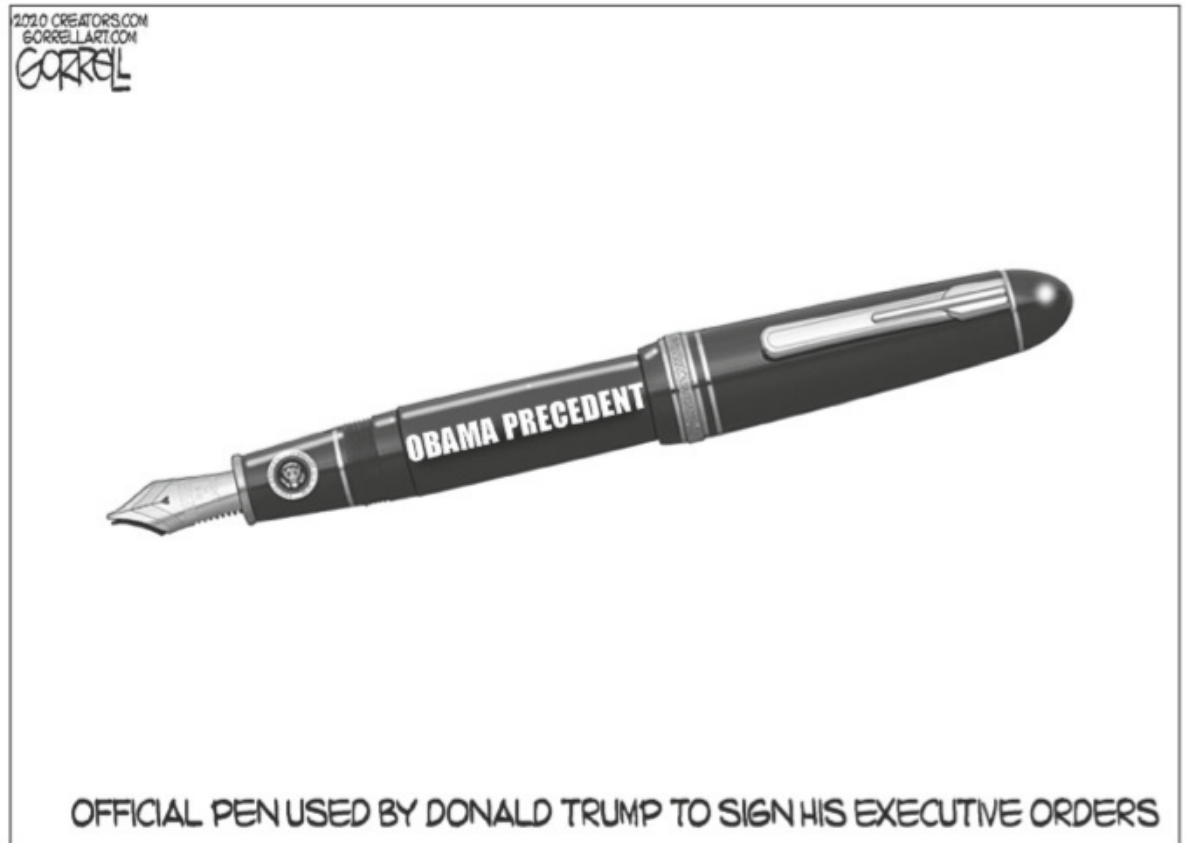
“Romance is the glamour which turns the dust of everyday life into a golden haze.” **Novelist Elinor Glyn**, quoted in *GoodReads.com*

“Everyone is always in favor of general economy and particular expenditure.” **British Prime Minister Anthony Eden**, quoted in *Forbes.com*

Poll watch

■ **55%** of Americans aren’t confident that the November election will be conducted fairly. Republicans express the most skepticism, at **65%**, while **46%** of Democrats aren’t confident. **86%** of Democrats, **63%** of independents, and **23%** of Republicans want to change election laws so everyone can vote by mail. **55%** of all voters say they are likely to cast ballots by mail in November. NBC News/SurveyMonkey





Antitrust: Google hates talking about ‘market share’

Of the four Big Tech companies that appeared before Congress last month, Google has the most to fear, said **Richard Nieva** in *CNET.com*. Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg took more questions (62) from lawmakers than Google parent Alphabet’s CEO Sundar Pichai (61). But Google is “in the most imminent danger of antitrust action.” The company processes about 90 percent of the online searches in the U.S., fueling its digital advertising business, which makes up most of its \$160 billion in annual sales. That stranglehold is what committee members like Rep. David Cicilline seized on, accusing Google of abusing its position as the “gateway to the web” to promote its own services.



Google’s Pichai roused lawmakers’ ire.

Other businesses’ reliance on Google “has only grown during the pandemic, when the internet has become the main avenue of commercial life,” said **Mark Bergen** and **Shelly Banjo** in *Bloomberg Businessweek*. Consider the plight of a therapist trying to get noticed right now. In 2019, Ellen Ross had to spend only about \$20 per day to get her practice to appear at the top of Google search results for “therapists near me” in the San Jose area. But the pandemic lockdowns rendered such searches useless. Ross was left bidding for ad space against “proliferating virtual therapy startups” like TalkSpace and BetterHelp. Google points to “its fierce rivalry with Facebook and Amazon, but for

therapists, lawyers, and anyone offering a service, this argument is bogus.” People go to Facebook for baby pictures, not to find a local business.

Google’s most frequent defense is that despite its dominance in search, it doesn’t control enough of the digital ad industry “to overcharge its customers and box out its competitors,” said **David McCabe** in *The New York Times*. A “67-page document sent to Australian regulators” laid out arguments Google will likely use in the U.S., including that Google’s bidding system has made buying ads more efficient for small businesses. If Google had its way, we wouldn’t talk about “market share” at all, said **Adrianne Jeffries** in *The Markup.org*. In internal documents, Googlers are warned away from the words and advised that “we use the term ‘User Preference for Google Search.’”

Google’s problems go beyond language, said *The Economist*—or antitrust. Alphabet, Google’s parent, now has a whole herd of businesses, but Google still generates 83 percent of its revenue. New employees who come in expecting a grand strategy instead find a company that often tries to solve problems by “throwing money at them and hiring more bodies.” The main risk for Google is not antitrust action but the traditional big-company perils: “lack of innovation and declining growth.”

Innovation of the week

A new software tool can “cloak” your selfies to trick facial recognition systems, said **James Vincent** in *The Verge.com*. Scientists at the University of Chicago designed new



AI privacy software to combat the proliferation of commercial facial recognition systems that scrape people’s images off social media, such as Clearview AI. Their tool—named Fawkes after the Guy Fawkes masks adopted by some hackers and revolutionaries—makes subtle enough changes to your photos “so that any algorithm scanning those images in the future sees you as a different person altogether.” Some early trials did reveal flaws. A *New York Times* tester found that she looked “ghoulish,” and her husband “appeared to have a black eye.” But Fawkes says “the updated algorithm is much more subtle, and *The Verge’s* own tests agree with this.”

Bytes: What’s new in tech

A gaming war in the App Store

Facebook and Microsoft are furious at Apple App Store policies that threaten their computer-gaming ambitions, said **Lucas Matney** in *TechCrunch.com*. Facebook issued a scathing statement last week when its Gaming app was finally approved following months of deliberation, but only “after the company stripped one of its two central features, a library of playable mobile games.” Microsoft’s new xCloud app, a software platform due to be launched next month that allows “gamers to livestream titles from the cloud,” was also denied entrance into the App Store. Apple said it didn’t have the capacity to ensure all the Xbox titles are “safe.” Microsoft accused Apple of treating “gaming apps differently” from other media services to preserve its own profits from games, the most lucrative part of the App Store.

Instagram’s TikTok clone

Instagram’s new short-form video feature, Reels, “looks and feels just like TikTok,” said **Nicole Nguyen** in *The Wall Street Journal*. Like the explosively popular ByteDance product, Reels lets users “create, distribute, and consume” super-short video clips and add to them popular music and various filters and

effects. “The similarities between TikTok and Reels run deeper than function.” While Reels isn’t a stand-alone app—it’s found within Instagram’s Explore feed—users swipe up or down to move between videos, just like TikTok, and “many Reels I watched were actually imported TikTok videos.” It’s not the first time another product has been “the focus of Facebook’s flattery.” Snapchat has been so often imitated by Instagram that it “tracked its archcompetitor’s aggressive tactics in a file called ‘Project Voldemort.’”

How autocorrect defeated biology

“Some 27 human genes have had to be renamed because Microsoft Excel kept misreading their symbols as dates,” said **James Vincent** in *The Verge.com*. The alphanumeric symbol MARCH1—short for “Membrane Associated Ring-CH-Type Finger 1” was regularly autoformatted by the spreadsheet as a date, 1-Mar. It’s not only “really, really annoying,” as one scientist put it, but can also corrupt data, which then have to be sorted by hand. “Excel errors” have become so pervasive, the scientific body that standardizes the names of genes recently published new guidelines, so that “the symbol MARCH1 has now become MARCHF1.”

Cruise ship offers transmission clues

Scientists trying to understand exactly how the coronavirus is transmitted have conducted a deep analysis of what might be the best case study of viral spread: the Covid-19 outbreak on board the *Diamond Princess* cruise ship. For researchers, the vessel was essentially a giant experiment-in-a-bottle, reports *The New York Times*. On Jan. 20, an infected person boarded the ship; a month later, more than 700 of the 3,711 passengers and crew had tested positive, and many became dangerously ill. The scientists ran more than 20,000 computer simulations of how the virus might have spread, each with different assumptions for social interactions, how long passengers spent in their cabins, and other factors.

Each simulation also took into account the contributions of virus-laden aerosols—tiny droplets emitted when a person speaks, breathes, coughs, or sneezes, which can float in the air for minutes and be breathed in—and larger droplets, which fall quickly to the ground. Many clinicians have argued that these larger droplets—which are similarly emitted and can infect surfaces or people, if they land on someone’s nose or mouth—are the primary means of transmission. But the new study found that about 60 percent of infections on the *Diamond Princess* were caused by tiny aerosols. Good ventilation didn’t prevent the virus spreading, the researchers noted, which suggests that people should wear



Diamond Princess: A perfect case study

masks even in well-ventilated spaces. “Many people have argued that airborne transmission is happening, but no one had numbers for it,” says study leader Parham Azimi, from Harvard University. “In this paper, we provide the first real estimates.”



Young kids can have high viral loads.

Are children virus vectors?

A small new study from Chicago has found that children with Covid-19 carry just as much of the virus in their nose and throat as adults—and that those under age 5 can host up to 100 times more. If confirmed, reports *Reuters.com*, this finding could undermine a key assumption underpinning the reopening of schools around the world: that children don’t spread the virus as easily as their parents. The researchers examined levels of viral nucleic acid—genetic traces of the coronavirus—in 145 patients with mild or moderate symptoms. They found that viral loads in older children, ages 5 to 17, were similar to levels in adults. But among those younger than 5, the levels were often much higher. The study doesn’t prove that children can spread the virus to others. But it does suggest that scientists have a lot more to learn about transmission in children. “I’ve heard lots of people saying, ‘Well, kids aren’t susceptible, kids don’t get infected,’” says Stacey Schultz-Cherry, a virologist at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital. “This clearly shows that’s not true.”

Covid-19 and kidney failure

A worryingly high proportion of patients with severe Covid-19 are sustaining serious kidney damage that may have long-term health impacts. That’s the conclusion of

a new study from Mount Sinai Hospital System in New York, reports *CNBC.com*. Conducted from February to May, the research involved 4,000 coronavirus patients with a median age of 64. Forty-six percent sustained acute kidney injury; of those, 17 percent required urgent dialysis. Strikingly, 82 percent of those affected had no history of kidney problems. Overall, more than a third of patients who survived the virus did not recover the same kidney function that they had before getting infected. Other hospitals report similar findings: Doctors working with the Centers for Disease Control say up to 50 percent of Covid-19 patients who require intensive care suffer kidney failure. The virus affects the kidneys in different ways. It can send the immune system into overdrive, damaging organs. It can trigger sepsis, which can lead to multiple organ failure. And ventilators used in treatment can reduce blood flow through the kidneys. Nephrologist Steven Coca says chronic kidney disease among Covid-19 survivors will be “the next epidemic” in the U.S.

A beetle’s Houdini act

When one animal eats another, it’s typically game over for the prey. But a plucky species of water beetle has developed a cunning survival strategy when swallowed whole by a frog: It finds its way through its host’s gut, forces the frog to poop, and safely makes its exit. In multiple lab tests to examine this unlikely escape act, researchers presented a *Pelophylax nigromaculatus* pond frog with a *Regimbartia attenuata* beetle, reports *ScientificAmerican.com*. The swallowed beetles re-emerged from the back end 93 percent of the time, typically making their getaway within four hours—though the fastest managed it in just six minutes. The beetles were “frequently entangled in fecal pellets,” says lead author Shinji Sugiura, from Kobe University in Japan, but they “recovered immediately” and survived for at least two weeks after excretion. The fact that frogs typically don’t defecate that soon after a meal suggests that *R. attenuata* has evolved to stimulate its host’s anus, or fecal vent, into opening.

A cosmic butterfly

Astronomers have captured an extraordinarily detailed image of a so-called space butterfly. Named for its resemblance to the winged insect, this astral phenomenon is a rare form of planetary nebula—a giant cloud of blue, red, and purple gas that forms when



Made by a dying star

ancient stars shed their outer layers. The butterfly effect, which occurs in only 10 to 20 percent of nebulae, is the result of a second star interfering with the flow of gas around the dying star. The research-

ers who took the image say the butterfly “appears to float and flutter across the sky.” It is a relatively short-lived phenomenon in astronomical terms, lasting only a few thousand years, reports *CNN.com*. The nebula, known as NGC 2899, is somewhere between 3,000 and 6,500 light-years from Earth, in the constellation Vela, which can be seen from the

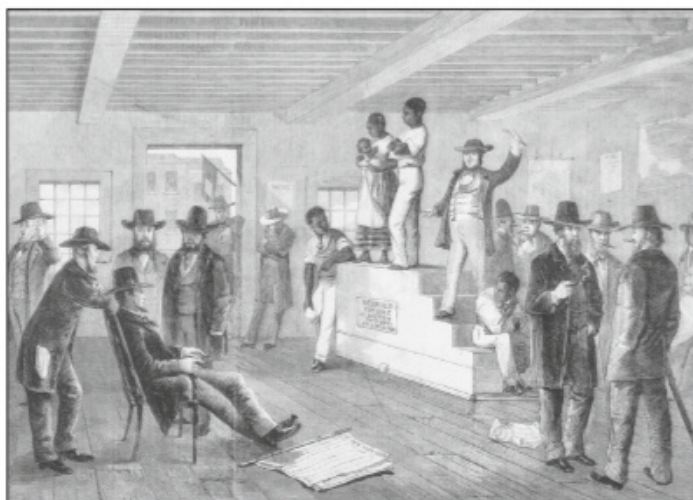
Southern Hemisphere. The image was captured with the European Southern Observatory’s Very Large Telescope—the world’s most advanced optical instrument—which is stationed in Chile.

Review of reviews: Books

Book of the week

Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents by Isabel Wilkerson (Random House, \$32)

Isabel Wilkerson's latest work is "almost certainly the keynote nonfiction book of the American century thus far," said **Dwight Garner** in *The New York Times*. "An instant American classic," *Caste* forcefully contends that we misunderstand America's original and abiding sin when we label it racism. One predilection, in her view, actually runs deeper. "Caste is the bones, race the skin," she writes, meaning that the culture, as built, requires a permanent hierarchy of population groups and that differentiation by race is largely a consequence and instrument of that need. Wilkerson, the award-winning author of *The Warmth of Other Suns*, in no way diminishes the brutality of slavery or of the systemic forms of racial injustice that have followed. While rarely using the word "racism," *Caste* "stares it down with more rigor than nearly all but a few books in our literature."



An 1861 slave market: 'Caste-ism' at its cruelest

It might sound odd to hear the word "caste" used to describe life in the U.S., said **Gillian Tett** in the *Financial Times*. But Wilkerson argues for recognizing the parallels between America's embedded social hierarchy and the caste system of India. She even draws parallels with Nazi Germany, noting how some of its laws were derived from the Jim Crow South. "Wilkerson's book is strongest when she illustrates her points through poignant stories," said **Kenneth Mack** in *The Washington Post*. She introduces a black Texan whose parents named her

Miss in defiance of the white custom of addressing black people only by their first names. She shares several powerful anecdotes of indignities she has personally suffered because she is black. She mines similar tales from India, using them to illuminate important parallels, including how all caste systems insist that a given social hierarchy reflects a divine or natural order.

Wilkerson isn't the first black scholar to emphasize caste in the American context, said **Lauren Michele Jackson** in *New York* magazine. She credits intellectual forebears from the 1930s through '60s. Still, what exactly changes if we join her and others in labeling the problem "caste-ism?" Either way, as Wilkerson herself writes, "the American bottom caste is and always has been black." And when she finally tries to answer how the system of social hierarchy can be torn up from the taproot, she resorts to suggesting it can be done by changing hearts, one at a time. "It's a nice place to be, a place where we can believe people in power are one sincere interaction away from radical empathy." But "we've been here before, haven't we?"

Novel of the week

The Pull of the Stars

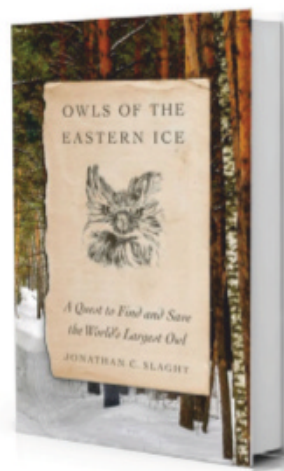
by Emma Donoghue (Little, Brown, \$28)

Reading Emma Donoghue's new novel is "such a disquieting experience," said **Maureen Corrigan** in *NPR.org*. Writing about the 1918 flu epidemic, the author of *Room* "presciently anticipated the miseries and terrors of our present." The book's protagonist, Julia Power, is a nurse midwife in a Dublin hospital who has been put in charge of tending to flu-afflicted mothers-to-be in a converted storage room. There, she sees more dying than even the grim norm. "Squeamish readers may blanch at Donoghue's graphic accounts of childbirth," said **Wendy Smith** in *The Washington Post*. They also might suspect her of stacking the deck when Julia and her orphan assistant are joined by a female doctor who once had participated in a 1916 insurrection against British rule—except that Kathleen Lynn was a real person freed from prison to fight the pandemic. "From these dark materials, Donoghue has fashioned a tale of heroism that reads like a thriller, complete with gripping action sequences, mortal menaces, and triumphs all the more exhilarating for being rare and hard-fought."

Owls of the Eastern Ice: A Quest to Find and Save the World's Largest Owl

by Jonathan C. Slaght

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$28)



Jonathan Slaght's description of his first run-in with a Blakiston's fish owl "alerts us that this is no ordinary owl, and Slaght is no ordinary writer," said **Heller McAlpin** in *The Wall Street Journal*. The young biologist was hiking in Russia's Far East when he accidentally flushed an owl larger and stranger than any he'd seen. "This disheveled mass of wood-chip brown regarded us warily with electric-yellow eyes," he writes. "It seemed almost too big and too comical to be a real bird, as if someone had hastily glued fistfuls of feathers to a yearling bear." For the next five winters, Slaght returned to study the endangered creature, and his account of that work "belongs to a rare species of nature writing in which facts are delivered with both exactitude and storytelling panache."

The story combines "cliff-hangers and drama, careful scientific observation, and a dash of humor," said **Laurie Hertz** in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*. Slaght and two colleagues aimed to tag a few owls, then devise a conservation plan. But nothing was easy. The mountainous Primorsky Krai region features subzero temperatures and sudden blizzards. The team was welcomed by the forest's few inhabitants but often expected to join in paralyzing vodka binges. One local hermit insisted that gnomes enter his cabin each night and tickle his feet.

The effort all seems worthwhile once the owls are finally located again, said **Helen Macdonald** in *The Guardian.com*. A fire hydrant-size creature with a 6-foot wingspan, it "resembles a beast pulled straight from the pages of a medieval bestiary." Slaght's team succeeds in convincing a logging company to steer clear of the owls' habitat. Still, no local conservation effort can arrest the onslaught of climate change, and after a typhoon strikes in 2016, Slaght returns to Primorsky fearing the worst. "But—and how my heart leaped, reading it—he finds the owls still there." A female on a high perch locks eyes with him before taking flight, "a magnificently resilient creature carried on soft wings across her wilderness of broken trees."

Best books...chosen by Rick Perlstein

Rick Perlstein's new book, *Reaganland*, is the fourth volume in his prize-winning series about the conservative movement in America since Barry Goldwater. Below, Perlstein recommends books that explain Ronald Reagan's late-1970s rise.



Early Reagan by Anne Edwards (1987). Reagan biographers tend to be worshipful supplicants, knee-jerk deriders, or those striving so hard for an "unbiased" middle path that they make errors like treating Reagan's memoirs as factual records even though they contradict one another. Edwards just did the *work*—including tracking down high school yearbook doggerel mocking the teenage Reagan for "rescuing" people who weren't drowning, in order to build his self-image as a hero. Hard to grasp Reagan without this book.

For a 'Christian America' by Ruth Murray Brown (2002). Brown was a sociologist who dug deep in real time within the army of "housewives"—many involving themselves in politics for the first time—who built a major rampart in the Reagan coalition behind the backs of pundits.

The Book of Jerry Falwell by Susan Friend Harding (2000). Another masterpiece that dared to not concern itself with the feelings of its subjects, in this case, born-again Christians. Harding comes to her topic as an anthropologist seeking to understand a worldview from the inside. The picture of fundamentalist Christian America that

emerges is so surreal, even this well-versed reader found himself rubbing his eyes in astonishment.

Fluctuating Fortunes by David Vogel (1989). In the first decades after World War II, big business largely accepted and even welcomed government and labor as equal partners in economic life. Vogel's is the best account of the shift that created the world we know now, showing how when profits began falling in the 1970s, business turned against that partnership with a vengeance.

The Last Great Senate by Ira Shapiro (2012). Most accounts of the supposedly halcyon days of bipartisan comity in Washington are sappy, sentimental, and shallow. This one, written by a former senatorial aide, is actually convincing.

Strange Rebels by Christian Caryl (2013). Caryl brilliantly knits together a coherent narrative of the year 1979, connecting the theocratic revolutions in Iran and Afghanistan, the market revolution in China, and the Thatcher revolution in England. The crucial common thread: Intellectuals, policymakers, and media experts considered each event inconceivable. That's as useful a lesson now as ever.

Author of the week

Stephenie Meyer

Stephenie Meyer gives her fans what they want—eventually, said **Samantha Leach** in *Bustle.com*. Twelve years ago, the *Twilight* author was rewriting the first novel in her blockbuster teen romance series from the perspective



of Edward, the immortal young vampire who falls for high schooler Bella Swan. But then unfinished

chapters were leaked online, and Meyer, feeling wronged, dropped the project. Luckily for fans, Meyer's mother is a fan, too, and one year she told Stephenie the only thing she wanted for Mother's Day was Edward's story, told up through a famous scene with Bella in an idyllic meadow. "There was nothing else I could get her," Meyer says. Still, a dozen years after the last *Twilight* book, would any other readers still care about teenager-vampire romance? "I thought I'd missed my window," Meyer says. Then she announced the book and the news crashed her website.

"A lot has changed in the world since the first book," said **Concepción de León** in *The New York Times*. The #MeToo movement cast a spotlight on abusive relationships, and Edward, beneath his brooding good looks, is a killer who spies on Bella and manipulates her. Meyer hopes *Midnight Sun* contextualizes Edward's behavior, revealing his gnawing anxieties. "When you're in his head, it's a whole different experience," she says. "He starts off fairly confident, but boy does he get broken down by the end." Still, she has no desire to rewrite any other entry in the series from Edward's viewpoint. "I plan to spend a lot of time in other worlds where vampires don't exist," she says. "My hope is that I can finish another book in a lot less time."

Also of interest...senses and sensibilities

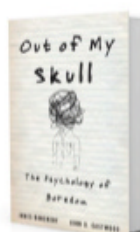
Smells

by Robert Muchembled (Polity, \$25)



We're lucky we don't live in the time when urine barrels and horse corpses littered the street, said Rebecca Onion in *Slate.com*. But we live in a culture shaped by the resulting stench. In this "disgusting, delicious" book about the smells of pre-1789 France, historian Robert Muchembled mixes amusing olfactory trivia with a determination to understand the ways that those odors changed gender and class relationships. "As diversionary history to read in a pandemic summer goes, this is a good one."

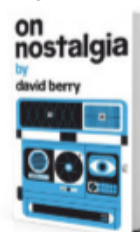
Out of My Skull by James Danckert and John D. Eastwood (Harvard, \$28)



"Don't let boredom bring you down," said Eric Cortellessa in *Washington Monthly*. This book, by a pair of psychologists, "offers an essential insight": Boredom isn't to be fought; it's to be listened to. Boredom, they say, always stems from a crisis of agency—of feeling insufficiently engaged and effective—and thus is our brain's way of telling us to change what we're doing. *Out of My Skull* is "at its strongest" when deconstructing boredom and describing the right type of response.

On Nostalgia

by David Berry (Coach House, \$16)



Nostalgia has become a huge cultural force, but it didn't start that way, said Robert Wiersema in the *Toronto Star*. David Berry's thought-provoking new book tells us that yearning for the past was once considered a disease so virulent that Russian doctors prescribed burying the afflicted alive. Though the book is slim, "Berry's writing is complex and layered" and "leavened with a sly wit." He has provided "a rigorous unpacking of a term and an experience which we have long taken for granted."

22 Minutes of Unconditional Love

by Daphne Merkin (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$26)



Daphne Merkin's novel about an accomplished editor's intense affair with an older man "recalls not only the frank carnality of Updike and Roth but also of Erica Jong," said Sam Sacks in *The Wall Street Journal*. Judith Stone knows she might be making a mistake, because her lover is manipulative and lewd, but Merkin isn't offering a cautionary tale about sexual desire. "The stupid, youthful abandon of the fling is what, to her, makes it worthy of tribute."

The Eisenhower Memorial: A last gasp for 'great men'?



Gehry's ode to Ike, and to a bygone America

The Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial near the National Mall has only recently been completed, but already it “feels a bit like the last memorial of a passing age,” said Philip Kennicott in *The Washington Post*. “The idea of great men is necessarily more complicated and fraught than it was when this memorial was conceived”—and so, too, is the idea of American exceptionalism. The project, authorized by Congress in 1999 and awarded 11 years later to architect Frank Gehry, “is unlike any other memorial in Washington.” In part, that’s a result of the particular challenges of the site. But Gehry also aimed to create a memorial that captures how fleeting and multifaceted

any life can be. Instead of one Eisenhower, we get three: a war-time general addressing paratroopers, a president absorbing the counsel of his advisers, and a boy, seated on the ground and hugging his knees.

Not every element succeeds. The central feature is a giant steel-mesh “tapestry” that evokes an ancient way of celebrating military heroes after death. Gehry’s version usefully obscures the Department of Education’s unlovely headquarters, but its hand-drawn rendering of the site of the 1944 Normandy landing is hard to read during the daytime. At night, when lights illuminate the drawing, however, “it is magical.” Eisenhower was imperfect: As president, he toppled the democratically elected leader of Iran and banned homosexuals from federal employment. But Gehry attempted to honor Eisenhower’s historic contributions without deifying the man, and he has succeeded. The memorial will be officially dedicated next month; my prediction is that in just a few years, it will be “regarded primarily as a green island of old-fashioned geniality in a failing city that was once the capital of the free world.”

Protest art: The Trump era’s instant Michelangelo?

“Big, shiny gold statues of Donald Trump sound like they would be right up the president’s alley,” said Sarah Cascone in *Artnet.com*. But Bryan Buckley’s



Fake flattery in D.C.

Trump Statue Initiative aims to mock its subject, and the prominent director of TV commercials is doing that by having gold-painted actors re-enact some of Trump’s most infamous 2020 moments. One tableau that popped up in Washington, D.C., depicted the president cowering in a bunker; another showed him holding a Bible aloft while a police officer pummeled a Black Lives Matter protester. In Portland, Ore., the faux monuments portrayed federal officers throwing a protester into a van and Trump praying before a photo of accused sex trafficker Ghislaine Maxwell. So far, the satirical jabs have only appeared in anti-Trump strongholds, but Buckley says that will change.

New and notable podcasts

Dirty Diana

(QCODE)



Frank talk about sex is far from taboo in podcasting, and “now the big guns have arrived,” said Fiona Sturges in the *Financial Times*. Demi Moore is the producer and star of

this new fictional series about an unhappily married middle-aged professional with a secret side hustle: recording and broadcasting women’s erotic confessions. Judging *Dirty Diana* by its first episode alone, “the best I can say is that it’s not entirely awful,” because the show aspires to build empathy for its female characters while also delivering the promised titillation (which only made me laugh—“but, then again, I am very childish”). Moore is “perfect as Diana,” a woman whose pastime provides a badly needed release, said Morgan McNaught in *AVClub.com*. And the screen star has gathered an impressive roster of guests, including Melanie Griffith and Lena Dunham. *Dirty Diana* is, essentially, “a summer beach read for your ears”—“a great entry point” for anyone intrigued by audio erotica.

Pindrop

(TED)



“It’s impossible to capture an entire city in one podcast episode,” said Steve Greene in *IndieWire.com*. But by seeking out one story that encapsulates the particular wonder of

each setting, this series does the next best thing. Host Saleem Reshamwala first takes listeners to Bangkok, where a woman in labor becomes locked in impossible traffic. The taxi driver calls a radio station, which contacts a police division of “motorcycle midwives” who provide roadside birth assistance. In each episode, Reshamwala spotlights people who are helping their communities in surprising ways, said Phoebe Lett in *The New York Times*. A dissident art movement in Nairobi offers a joyous counterpoint to the usual stories of war and poverty. In Mantua Township, N.J., researchers campaign to protect a cache of dinosaur bones from encroaching developers. At a time when faraway places feel impossible to reach, Pindrop’s “surprising, hyperlocal stories” might be just the ticket.

Smartless

(Bateman, Hayes, Arnett)



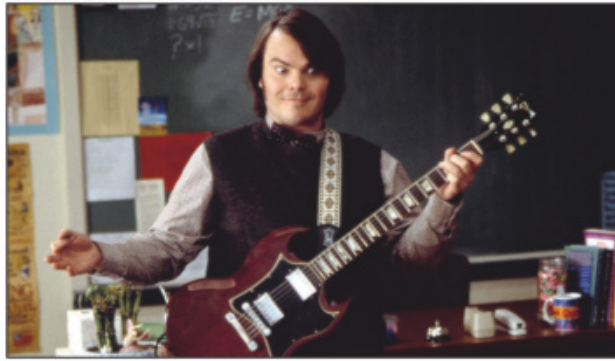
Three reliably funny actors have finally found a vehicle for showcasing their rapport, said Natalie Jarvey in *The Hollywood Reporter*. Old friends Will Arnett, Jason

Bateman, and Sean Hayes have created a weekly interview series with a twist: On each episode, one of the three brings the guest and the other two learn the guest’s identity as the conversation begins. That guarantees spontaneity, whether the guest is a Hollywood personality, astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson, or Los Angeles Philharmonic conductor Gustavo Dudamel. “With such affable personalities at the helm, quick wit abounds,” said Becca James in *NYMag.com*. Hayes chose comedian Dax Shepard as his first guest, and the conversation winds from the serious (alcoholism) to the silly (how many times Shepard is called “Kristen Bell’s husband”). Though the hosts “don’t reinvent the wheel,” the show has “endless potential for unfiltered access to their famous friends and fun times.”

Home viewing: 10 great options for family movie night



Dern, Neill, and an ailing triceratops



School of Rock's Jack Black



Parvana, with a friend, in *The Breadwinner*

Jurassic Park

Early this summer, when drive-in theaters ruled the cinema landscape but had no new blockbusters to screen, Steven Spielberg's dinosaur thriller once again became the highest-grossing film in America—27 years after it owned the summer of 1993.

Spielberg has made even better movies, said A.O. Scott in *The New York Times*. But he's "just so good at providing jolts and giggles as he builds toward a big scare or a hair's-breadth escape," and *Jurassic Park* boasts an unusually evergreen cast in Jeff Goldblum, Laura Dern, Samuel L. Jackson, and Sam Neill. (PG-13) *Netflix*

Ernest & Celestine

Great for young children but also enjoyable for adults, this 2014 Oscar nominee is "not your average delicately animated film," said Henry Casey in *TomsGuide.com*. When a mouse stands up to the bear who tries to eat her, "the pair become thick as thieves by actually robbing a candy shop"—even while nursing ambitions as an artist and performer. The "fantastic" voice actors include Forest Whitaker, Mackenzie Foy, and Lauren Bacall. (PG) *Amazon Prime*

Hunt for the Wilderpeople

"Just try not singing 'Ricky Baker happy birthday' over and over again after watching this heartwarmingly delightful indie," said Olivia Blair in *Elle.com*. Taika Waititi's 2016 comedy adventure pairs a juvenile delinquent with a cantankerous Sam Neill; the two become unlikely targets of a man-hunt in the New Zealand bush. If they're caught, Ricky might just be forced back into child services. (PG-13) *Hulu*

WALL-E

"The most original and ambitious of all the Pixar movies," this hugely inventive drama noses out *Toy Story* as the animation studio's greatest film yet, said Tim Grierson and Will Leitch in *NYMag.com*. The film's first half hour is "almost Kubrickian in its attention to detail" as the title character, a small, solitary trash-compacting robot,

attempts to clean up the endless detritus of a ruined world. When the melancholy machine discovers love, *WALL-E* takes flight, manifesting "the absolute pinnacle of what Pixar can do." (G) *Disney+*

School of Rock

"*School of Rock* is pretty much the perfect film for the whole family," said Abby Gardner in *Glamour.com*. Playing a struggling hard-rock guitarist who poses as a substitute teacher at a prestigious private school, Jack Black "is at peak non-annoying Jack Black-ness," and director Richard Linklater lets his star's live-wire energy light up a classroom of precociously talented fifth-graders. When the kids start rocking out as they prep for a battle of the bands, "it's no surprise the film spawned a highly successful Broadway show." (PG-13) *HBO*

The Secret Garden

You can find a "visually opulent" new adaptation of *The Secret Garden* currently available on demand, but turn to Agnieszka Holland's 1993 version to see the novel's main character perfectly realized, said Sheena Scott in *Forbes.com*. Mary Lennox is "essentially a very annoying spoiled brat in the beginning," but we never lose sympathy for the orphaned girl as she moves to her uncle's Yorkshire manor and discovers a long-neglected garden as well as a cousin who's been kept shut away. Aided by Roger Deakins' cinematography, the film "touches on the magical imagination of children without pushing the magical realism too far." (G) *HBO Max*

The Little Prince

The animated 2015 adaptation of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's beloved book "somehow manages to pay homage to the original story while expanding it to beautiful new heights," said Nick Perry in *DigitalTrends.com*. Director Mark Osborne invented a framing story about a girl who rediscovers a sense of adventure when she befriends an old pilot, voiced by Jeff Bridges, who spins a fantastical story about a boy from

another planet. "Read the book with your kids, then watch the movie, and you'll build a lasting memory." (PG) *Netflix*

The Parent Trap

There's a reason why Lindsay Lohan became a star, said Annabel Iwegbue in *HarpersBazaar.com*. In her breakout performance, the 11-year-old soap opera veteran played twins who grew up separately, including one sister with a British accent. When Hallie and Annie accidentally meet at a summer camp and start scheming to reunite their divorced parents, "the results are fantastic." Never mind the plot holes in this 1998 gem, which also features full-on charm offensives from Dennis Quaid and Natasha Richardson: "Seeing the separated family come together again is just so enjoyable to watch." (PG) *Disney+*

The Breadwinner

One of the best animated films of the past decade, this wrenching drama "does more to humanize the people living under Taliban rule in Afghanistan than just about anything else we've seen," said Dave Trumbore in *Collider.com*. When her father is unjustly arrested, 11-year-old Parvana cuts off her hair and poses as a boy to support her family. "It's a tough watch at times, but a heartening one, and beautifully told." (PG-13) *Netflix*

The Peanut Butter Falcon

The bond that developed between unlikely co-stars is the reason to watch this salty yet sweet 2019 drama, said Rob Harvilla in *TheRinger.com*. Shia LaBeouf portrays a troubled crab fisherman in North Carolina's Outer Banks, and Zack Gottsagen, a first-time actor with Down syndrome, plays an escapee from an assisted living home who dreams of being a pro wrestler. The results could have been unbearably twee, "like if a ukulele wrote a movie." But whenever LaBeouf and Gottsagen are just horsing around, you can tell they became close, and "it is shocking how rarely that happens in movies." (PG-13) *Hulu and Amazon Prime*

Streaming tips

The best Britcoms...

The Thick of It

Veep creator Armando Iannucci sent up British politics in this savagely funny portrait of dysfunctional government. Before he became the 12th Doctor Who, Peter Capaldi killed it as a razor-tongued prime minister's aide who was dubbed "Iago with a BlackBerry." If you enjoyed *Fleabag* and *The Office*, this lesser-known BAFTA winner should be your next stop. *Amazon Prime*

The Inbetweeners

Turns out the awkwardness of being 17—and thus a repository of raging hormones—manifests the same way across cultures. Sort of a British *Freaks and Geeks*, this comedy series follows four dweebs nearly ready for university but failing spectacularly in the social arts. *Netflix*

Coupling

If you watched the entirety of *Friends* during lockdown—as so many Americans did—it might be time to visit their British equivalents. The sex-obsessed single friends of *Coupling* are franker, coarser, and often funnier than their American counterparts. *Hulu*

Fawlty Towers

Arguably the best British comedy of all time, even 45 years after its debut. Post *Monty Python*, John Cleese brilliantly inhabited Basil Fawlty, a misanthropic hotelier whose erratic obsequiousness produces timeless humor. *Netflix*

The IT Crowd

Sort of like *The Big Bang Theory*—only more absurdity, far better jokes, and Chris O'Dowd. *Netflix*

Absolutely Fabulous

Patsy and Edina, *Ab Fab*'s debauched protagonists, are to British sitcoms what Mick and Keith are to British rock. All of today's shows about women behaving badly owe a serious debt to Jennifer Saunders and Joanna Lumley. *Hulu*

The Week's guide to what's worth watching**The Suspect**

A riveting true-crime series from Canada revisits the story of a scion of the Moosehead Brewery who was tried and imprisoned for the brutal murder of his millionaire father. Dennis Oland was the prime suspect from the day of the 2011 crime, but his lawyers eventually uncovered evidence of gross incompetence on the part of detectives in the small coastal city of St. John, New Brunswick. Nine years later, the question of who bludgeoned Richard Oland to death at his office remains unanswered. *Available for streaming Tuesday, Aug. 18, Sundance Now*

High Score

Long before Twitch and the advent of video games as mass-audience online spectator sport, nothing was bigger than Pac-Man fever. This new docuseries heads back to the era of the joystick, the arcade, and the 8-bit console to tell the stories of the innovators who developed such paradigm-shifting products as *Space Invaders*, *Street Fighter*, and *Doom*. *Available for streaming Wednesday, Aug. 19, Netflix*

John Was Trying to Contact Aliens

An award-winning short documentary shares the story of John Shepherd, a technology enthusiast who for three decades broadcast ambient music millions of miles into space using a massive radio lab he built in his grandparents' rural northern Michigan home. *Available for streaming Thursday, Aug. 20, Netflix*

Chemical Hearts

Riverdale's Lili Reinhart has found a worthy side project. In a feature-length drama based on a YA novel by Krystal Sutherland, Reinhart plays an enigmatic new girl in school who walks with a limp and catches the eye of a boy who sees himself as a romantic who's never been in love. Reinhart executive-produced the movie and you can see why: It checks all the boxes for a satisfying teen romance. *Available for streaming Friday, Aug. 21, Amazon Prime*

Expedition to the Edge

Two years ago, Capt. Clemens Gabriel attempted



John Shepherd, dedicated extraterrestrial whisperer

to sail a ship farther north than any had gone before. This new docuseries joins the colorful "sea gypsy" and his family as they attempt the daring expedition through the Northwest Passage on an aging 120-foot ketch that was never built to be an icebreaker. The crew makes great company for viewers as the arctic weather takes its worst turn in a quarter century. *Sunday, Aug. 23, at 9 p.m., Discovery*

Other highlights
Punk'd

A new set of episodes arrives on Quibi for the service's reboot of the celebrity prank show. Chance the Rapper returns as host and ring-leader as he targets a new set of celebrity suckers. *Available for streaming Monday, Aug. 17, Quibi*

Dead Pixels

A British comedy mines the online gaming world for laughs, focusing on a cadre of young players of a fantasy game called *Kingdom Scrolls*. *Tuesday, Aug. 18, at 8 p.m., the CW*

Love in the Time of Corona

A two-night comedy series chronicles the Covid-era lives of four couples, played by actors who were filmed in their own homes using remote technologies. With Leslie Odom Jr. and Nicolette Robinson. *Saturday, Aug. 22, and Sunday, Aug. 23, at 8 p.m., Freeform*

Show of the week
The Vow

On the surface, Nxivm was a self-help company that taught women to reach their full potential. It had campuses where devotees lived and studied in upstate New York, Mexico, and Vancouver. But founder Keith Raniere had also built a close circle around him—women who identified as masters or slaves and who served as his sexual harem. Members were even subjected to branding—an idea dreamed up by *Smallville* actress Allison Mack, a Raniere intimate. A year after Raniere's criminal conviction, this series explores how so many became his victims or abettors. *Sunday, Aug. 23, at 10 p.m., HBO*



Raniere: A new breed of cult leader

Spicy pork kebabs: A go-to for as long as summer lasts

When you need a dinner off the grill in a hurry, “high, direct heat is your friend,” said Melissa Clark in *The New York Times*. Pork shoulder, the cut you use to make slow-cooked pulled pork, can also be cut into chunks, quick-marinated, and threaded on a skewer. In minutes, the meat “browns at the edges and sucks up the smoke, emerging, at its best, crisp, tender, and very juicy.”

The marinade is key and only requires that you throw all the ingredients in a blender. The pork can marinate 24 hours or as little as 30 minutes—“which is just enough time to light the grill and toss together a salad.” Better yet, the marinade will “work with just about anything,” including beef, chicken thighs, lamb, and dense fish such as salmon or swordfish.

You can also broil the meat on a rimmed baking sheet, flipping it once. However you end up cooking this recipe, “just be sure to garnish with slices of onion and herbs. Their bright freshness is a fine way to highlight the smoky depths of the char.”

Recipe of the week

Spicy pork kebabs with fennel, cumin, and red onion

1¾ lbs boneless pork shoulder (also known as pork butt), cut into 1½-inch chunks



And the marinade is not just for pork.

Kosher salt
1 lime, plus some wedges for serving
¼ cup cilantro or basil, leaves and tender stems, plus more for serving
2 tbsp fish sauce
2 garlic cloves, smashed and peeled
1 jalapeño or other green chile, seeded if desired
1 tsp honey
1½ tbsp fennel seeds
1 tbsp cumin seeds
1 tbsp coriander seeds
1 small red onion, sliced, for serving

Season pork lightly with kosher salt and put it in a bowl or resealable bag. Juice the

lime into a blender or food processor and add cilantro, fish sauce, garlic, jalapeño, and honey. Blend until the jalapeño and garlic are pureed, then add fennel, cumin, and coriander seeds and pulse four or five times to bruise the spices and mix them in.

Pour mixture over pork, tossing to coat the pieces. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes while you heat grill, or up to 24 hours.

When ready to cook, heat grill or broiler with a rack positioned 4 inches from the heat source.

Thread pork onto skewers, leaving a little space between cubes. Grill over the highest heat possible, or broil on high, for 2 to 5 minutes, then flip skewers and continue cooking until meat is browned all over and charred in spots. It should be just cooked through: A little pink is OK, but there shouldn’t be any red spots.

Arrange pork on a platter or individual plates with cilantro sprigs and onion slices on top, and lime wedges on the side for squeezing. Serves 4.

Editor’s note: Red onions from a major supplier were recalled last week after being tied to a salmonella outbreak. Consult news reports for safety information.

Corn on the cob: Tips for optimizing the pleasure



In truth, it’s a very forgiving staple.

For such a popular summer food, fresh corn “generates plenty of debate,” said Becky Krystal in *The Washington Post*. Below, a few tips that may up your corn game or simply ease your mind.

Selecting: For the freshest ears, look first for bright green husks and silks that are silky rather than dried out. Each ear should feel heavy for its size, indicating that it has retained plenty of moisture. And do not fret about corn worms and the holes they leave: You’ll cut off the section and eat the rest.

Storing: Corn is bred to last at room temperature. But refrigerate if you want to extend freshness.

Shucking: However you remove the husks and silk is fine, but *Cook’s Illustrated* has developed a clever method: Cut through each ear a few rows up from

the stalk, then place in the microwave, no more than four at a time. Run at full power for 30 to 60 seconds, then shake each ear by the uncut end and let the cob fall out.

Removing the kernels: When a recipe calls for corn off the cob, grab a Bundt cake pan. Place the cob’s narrow end in the hole; when you slice, the kernels will fall into the pan.

Cooking: You can argue among friends which is the best way to cook corn—grilled, boiled, steamed, and so on. You can eat corn raw as well. The truth, though is that many cooking methods do the job, and taste preferences are personal. Currently, my favorite technique is one of the easiest: microwaving the ears, husks and all. I recommend 4 minutes for one ear, 8 minutes for two, and 9 minutes for three. “The kernels steam inside the husk, coming out plump, juicy, and flavorful.”

Piquette: A natural spritzer

“Move over White Claw,” said Michael Alberty in the *Portland Oregonian*. U.S. winemakers are embracing piquette, a sparkling low-alcohol beverage made from the skins, stems, and seeds left when grapes are pressed for wine. Popular in 1800s France, piquette was rediscovered by a shop owner who persuaded an upstate New York winery to produce a batch in 2016.

Kramer Vineyards (\$7 per six-pack).

This new sparkler from Gaston, Ore., is “packed with flavors of peaches, tangerines, and tart grapefruit.”

Old Westminster Pet-Nat Piquette

Orange (\$19). *Wine Enthusiast* calls this Maryland product “the perfect pre-dinner wine: dry with tart stone fruits and just the right amount of spritz.”

Wild Arc Farm Traminette (\$15).

Made by the New York winery that started it all, said *BonAppetit.com*, this piquette “pricks your palate with salty effervescence.”



School or online: Choosing what's best for your child

"Across the country, parents are wrestling with how and where students should learn," said **Bob Musinski** in *USNews.com*. Often, families don't have much choice. But if you are still deciding between all-virtual and a combination of virtual and in-person learning (a solution many schools are using to keep classes small), you should consider three factors first: the age of the child, the infection rate in your community, and the health of everyone in your household. Younger children are more likely to struggle if they receive no in-person instruction. But consider the classroom option only if the local infection rate is below 5 percent—minimizing the odds that any small group will include an infected person. And realize that even low odds may be too great if someone at home has a preexisting condition such as asthma, diabetes, cancer, heart disease, or obesity.

Of course, "there's no such thing as zero risk," said *NPR.org*. But you can better evaluate and perhaps reduce the perils by scrutinizing your school's reopening plan and asking questions of administrators, including what they will do if a student or teacher tests positive. Many schools will be encouraging physical distancing by staggering students' schedules, breaking large classes into smaller "pods," and moving some academic instruction into gyms and auditoriums. Ventilation is also crucial, so

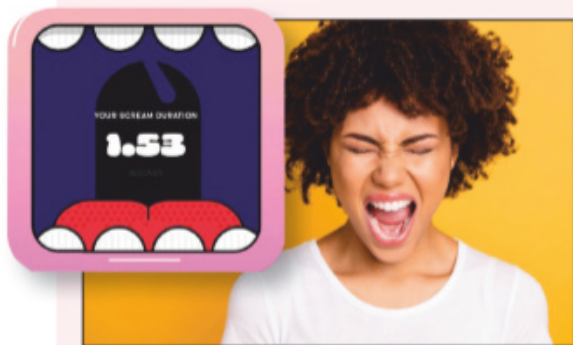


A family in Georgia waiting for the school bus

ask how the school will maximize air-flow. If you can't drive your children to school, ask whether the bus driver will enforce distancing and keep windows open. Most importantly, "look for consistent, mandatory mask usage for kids and adults."

Don't expect there to be "one right answer" to the back-to-school dilemma, even for your child, said **Pooja Lakshmin** in *The New York Times*. The CDC recently published a "school decision-making tool" that can help with the choice, and using such a detailed risk assessment system allows you to be appropriately deliberate in your thinking. Once you have decided, don't dwell on things you can't control, such as what other families are doing to discourage Covid's spread, because "the dogged search for certainty can itself lead to distress." Right now the best you can do is assess and mitigate risks, accept uncertainty, and above all remain flexible, because schools that are open now or in September may close again anyway. "The pandemic has only intensified what parents everywhere have long known: Parenting is an exercise in surrender." You do the best you can, and if you're smart, you credit yourself for the effort. "While no parent is feeling particularly confident about the school options available to them, it is possible to feel good about the process you use to make those decisions."

And if you're bored...



"For anyone wanting to scream endlessly into the abyss, the internet now has a place for you," said **Kevin Truong** in *Vice.com*. **Scream Club** (screamclub.club) is just what it sounds like: a website where visitors can scream at their computer or smartphone, then share their primal howl with the world. It was created by MSCHF, a Brooklyn-based "idea factory" that celebrates internet culture. There's even a leaderboard that ranks the longest screams, but if you don't feel like yelling, listening can be cathartic, too. "The playback is hilarious and sums up how many people must feel about 2020. It also highlights the different approaches people take when they do indeed scream."

Lockdown season: Making the most of it

In defense of Zoom funerals

The idea of funerals conducted on Zoom "sounds so tacky and degrading," said **Jeremy Smith** in *Slate.com*. But they are part of the new reality, and after attending one for my father's Uncle Larry recently, "I had the opposite conclusion: A Zoom funeral, in many ways, might be better than an in-person one." I laughed and cried as speakers scattered across the country offered eulogies that highlighted Larry's generosity and considerable quirks. "I was also struck by the reminder that I had a host of second cousins I had never met." Meeting them virtually "but very much face-to-face" suddenly made this commonplace technology seem awe-inspiring. Despite the distance between us, we were "close enough to meet each other's eyes."

How to stop 'doomscrolling'

"In this year of never-ending doom, it's hard to avoid all the bad news," said **Elizabeth Yuko** in *Lifehacker.com*. Constantly checking news-feeds and social media is a common coping mechanism, because staying up-to-date helps us feel more in control during a crisis. But if you always reach for your phone as soon as you wake up, "doomscrolling" can erode your mental health. Try to establish some personal

rules: No news after dinner, for example, because stress can interfere with sleep. Keep a book or podcast on hand to encourage more positive pastimes, and leave your phone or laptop in another room to minimize temptation. When you do go online, pay attention to how you feel. "If you're feeling agitated, your body is signaling you to stop what you're doing," says psychologist **Carla Marie Manly**.

Restrooms and the new normal

Finding a public toilet isn't always easy these days, said **Jeanette Marantos** in the *Los Angeles Times*. Many gas stations and restaurants have shuttered their restrooms to protect employees, which leaves you with one option: "lots of strategic planning." Supermarkets and big-box stores such as Target remain a good bet, and you may want to use a map app to plot stops on longer trips, even calling ahead to determine what's open. If you prefer more freedom, "do what truck drivers do and reach for a portable urinal." Options for women include the GoGirl, Tinkle Belle, and Easy Peezy. For privacy, you'll want the Stansport Pop-up Privacy Shelter, said **Jenny Friedler** in *NYMag.com*. Pair the folding tent with a portable toilet such as the Luggable Loo—"and *voilà*: a private bathroom in the middle of nowhere."

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Marketplace

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This week: Homes in Michigan

1 ► Iron Mountain Set beside Lake Antoine on the Upper Peninsula, this four-bedroom home comes with 515 feet of waterfront access. Crafted of polished hardwoods, brick, and stone throughout, the interior features vaulted ceilings, a split-face-granite fireplace, custom cabinetry, and an Italian marble mosaic shower in the master suite. The 3.4-acre wooded property has a pond, firepit, beach bath sauna at the lakefront, and four-car garage with in-law suite. \$1,800,000. Barb Shepherd, Harbor Sotheby's International Realty, (231) 526-9889



2 ◀ Grand Rapids This six-bedroom Tudor in Plymouth Heights was built in 1930. An extensive restoration preserved the leaded windows, wainscoting, hand-carved woodwork, inlaid wood and marble floors, and ornate moldings, while adding a chef's kitchen; a Swarovski dining room chandelier; and a granite wet bar and wood-burning fireplace in the basement. On the freshly landscaped lot are lawns, trees, a bluestone patio, and a large brick circular front walkway. \$1,125,000. Andrew Grashuis, Greenridge Realty, (616) 458-3655

3 ► Ann Arbor Perched on a hilltop lot in Ann Arbor Hills, this four-bedroom home offers a woodland setting minutes from downtown and the university. The updated 1951 house includes a two-story foyer with floor-to-ceiling windows, primary suite with balcony and spa bathroom, gourmet kitchen, three-season room, mudroom, and wine cellar. Outside are a wraparound deck, lawn and gardens, and access to nature trails. \$1,095,000. Megan Mazurek and Avery Evenson, Reinhart Realtors, (734) 971-6070





4 ► Traverse City The Wellington Inn, built in 1905 by a lumber baron, stands a few blocks from the beaches of Grand Traverse Bay. The fully restored neoclassical mansion, furnished throughout with period antiques, has nine bedrooms, a dining room, a library, and a ballroom and can serve as residence or inn. In back is a separate carriage house with a pair of two-bedroom apartments and an event space. \$3,100,000. Kellie Sargent, Century 21 Northland, (231) 499-1814



5 ◀ Jackson Violinist Max Helmer modeled his 1927 home on a 5th-century German castle he saw while on tour. More than 500 tons of rocks and 300 barrels of cement were used to construct it; a 1942 three-story addition included a great room and master suite. The five-bedroom home also has a dungeon, a 60-foot tower with lookout, and a lighted basketball court. The landscaped grounds on the 20-acre wooded property feature three patios and multilevel gardens. \$529,000. Carey and Ilze Chesney, Keller Williams Ann Arbor, (734) 478-3540



6 ► Rochester The local architect of this 1972 three-bedroom home was influenced by Eichler and worked with Minoru Yamasaki. The updated house has a new roof and paint, tiger-wood floors, a 16-foot-high great room, a living room with bar, a master suite with spa bathroom, and a basement potting room with garden windows. The lot includes a fenced backyard with lawn, garden beds, and deck. \$520,000. Dianne Gouin, HomePointe Realty LLC, (248) 420-0604



Steal of the week

The news at a glance

The bottom line

■ Just 13 of the world's 500 largest companies are run by women, one fewer than last year. For the first time since 2014, no business on the list is run by a woman of color. *Fortune*

■ Tesla announced a 5-1 stock split this week. Shares rose 13 percent the day after the announcement, closing above \$1,500. *Bloomberg.com*

■ American shoppers have spent \$435 billion online since the start of the year, and are on course to surpass total online spending in 2019 as soon as early October. *Financial Times*



■ A trade deal between Britain and Japan has hit a snag over \$133,000 worth of British cheese exports. The U.K. wants terms to be better than the

Japan-EU deal, which will phase out tariffs on hard cheeses by 2033. *Financial Times*

■ Retail businesses have lost 900,000 jobs since the pandemic started, while restaurants and bars have given up 2.6 million workers, or 20 percent of their total. *Fortune*

■ Berkshire Hathaway earned \$26.4 billion in the second quarter, a turnaround from a \$49.7 billion loss in the first quarter. In a sign that CEO Warren Buffett believes Berkshire's shares are undervalued, the company spent \$6.7 billion buying back its own stock. *The New York Times*

■ The number of federal white-collar defendants charged in President Trump's first three years in office is down between 26 percent and 30 percent from the annual average in the prior administration. *Bloomberg.com*

McDonald's: Clawing back a CEO's severance

McDonald's ignited a "rare public war" with its former CEO Steve Easterbrook, said David Enrich and Rachel Abrams in *The New York Times*. Departing from corporate America's "traditional disclose-it-and-move-on decorum," the fast-food giant sued Easterbrook last week to recoup the \$40 million compensation package he kept after he was fired for having a consensual relationship with a subordinate. At the time, the company said it was not firing Easterbrook for cause. But new allegations surfaced last month; the company found Easterbrook had tried to delete sexually explicit pictures of several employees he had "sent to his personal Hotmail account."



Easterbrook, at his old job

The McDonald's board is doing the right thing now, said Jennifer Saba in *BreakingViews.com*, but "Easterbrook's earlier escape shouldn't have been so easy." Last fall, directors chose to skirt the issue of cause because they feared if they paid Easterbrook "a bag of nothing-burgers he would fight back in court." Instead, they gave him such a generous severance package that one major shareholder urged other McDonald's investors to vote against management's pay plans. It's reasonable now to wonder whether the initial investigation went deep enough, and McDonald's will probably have to rethink how it defines "cause" for fired executives.

Logistics: Amazon looks at empty department stores

Amazon is talking with the country's largest mall owner about turning empty department stores into fulfillment centers, said Esther Fung and Sebastian Herrera in *The Wall Street Journal*. The e-commerce giant is trying to "add more distribution hubs near residential areas to speed up the crucial last mile of delivery." Discussions this week with Simon Property Group, the mall landlord, have focused on spaces once anchored by JCPenney and Sears, both of which have filed for bankruptcy. But a deal would "signal a break from a longtime business model for malls: reliance on a large department store to draw foot traffic."

ViacomCBS: Media tycoon Sumner Redstone dies

The media magnate Sumner Redstone has died at 97, leaving control of his empire in the hands of his daughter, Shari, said Jonathan Kandell in *The New York Times*. "Starting with a chain of drive-in movie theaters," Redstone built a media empire. He acquired the cable programmer Viacom in 1987, expanded his holdings by "wrestling Paramount Pictures" from Barry Diller in 1994, and bought CBS—once the crown jewel of American television—in 2000. But his waning years were marred by boardroom and family dramas. Shari Redstone engaged in a "high-profile battle for control" of both companies, prompting public speculation about her father's health and mental fitness.

Airbnb: Drawing closer to an IPO

Airbnb plans to file paperwork for an initial public offering, said Corrie Driebusch in *The Wall Street Journal*, "laying the groundwork for a potential listing before the end of the year." An IPO from Airbnb, founded in 2008, has been awaited for years by Airbnb's employees and Silicon Valley backers. Valued at over \$30 billion three years ago, Airbnb "rushed to secure financing" as people stopped traveling and cancellations piled up. Airbnb laid off a quarter of its staff in May, but its "rebound has been surprisingly swift" this summer.

Trade secrets: Star engineer sentenced to prison

The pioneering engineer Anthony Levandowski was sentenced to 18 months in prison for stealing trade secrets from Google, said Kirsten Korosec and Mark Harris in *TechCrunch.com*. Levandowski admitted to "downloading thousands of files" from an early Google self-driving project before he left to start an autonomous trucking company, Otto. He sold Otto to Uber less than eight months later, triggering "a multi-year legal saga." Levandowski filed a lawsuit in July alleging Uber owes him \$4.1 billion in earnouts from Otto, now called Uber Freight.

Nikola's strange \$36,000 windfall

One of the stock market's hottest companies reported a total of \$36,000 in revenue last quarter, said Pippa Stevens in *CNBC.com*, thanks entirely to solar installations at the home of the executive chairman. Nikola, an electric-truck developer, has become a symbol of the speculation-fueled stock frenzy this summer, "at one point establishing a market valuation topping that of Ford's, despite the fact that it has yet to produce a single vehicle for sale." But Nikola—now valued at \$16 billion—can no longer claim that it's just not ready for revenue. In its first quarterly report since going public in June, Nikola "recorded solar revenues of \$0.03 million and \$0.04 million." The company added that the solar installations were "not related to our primary operations and are expected to be discontinued." The bigger figure contained in the report: Nikola lost \$87 million in the past three months.

Inflation: Is the Fed rousing a slumbering giant?

The Federal Reserve is expected to announce policy changes aimed at lifting inflation, said **Jeff Cox** in *CNBC.com*. For many years, the Fed has had a target of 2 percent inflation. Now the central bank appears ready to move to a policy “in which inflation above the central bank’s usual target would be tolerated and even desired.” Analysts are anticipating a policy change as soon as September, and some believe that the Fed could tolerate inflation as high as 4 percent, an annual rate not seen in more than two decades.



Powell’s Fed may be more tolerant of inflation.

Pushing inflation past 2 percent would be “a whole new ballgame,” said **Tim Duy** in *Bloomberg.com*. Traditionally, the Fed aims to hit an inflation target by monitoring the unemployment rate and moderating growth to make sure the forecasted inflation doesn’t overrun the target. This is based on the theory that “inflation accelerates as unemployment falls.” To keep inflation in check the central bank raises interest rates and tightens the money supply. However, Fed worries about inflation “induced it to raise rates too early in the cycle and continue to boost them into late 2018 even as faltering markets signaled the hikes had gone too far.” Now Fed chairman Jerome Powell and economic policymakers appear willing to speed the recovery by keeping interest rates near zero until inflation hits the target—or even goes beyond it, if that’s needed to create jobs.

We’re already seeing inflation at the grocery checkout, where prices have skyrocketed because of supply-chain disruptions and hyperactive demand, said **Danielle Wiener-Bronner** in *CNN.com*. From February to June, meat and poultry prices have risen 11 percent, according to government research, with beef and veal prices spiking 20 percent. Egg prices have also shot up 10 percent, and cereals and vegetables are up 4 percent. This has investors feeling nervous, said **John Ainger** and **Liz McCormick** in *Bloomberg.com*. Many analysts were “burned badly by ominous forecasts

of runaway price gains” in 2008, so they “have been hesitant to repeat such calls, especially as the economy sinks into a deep recession.” But now economists, including top strategists at Goldman Sachs, are sounding an alarm.

Such fears may be premature, because inflation isn’t the crisis we need to worry about, said **Megan Cassella** in *Politico.com*. Roughly 7 million workers “have likely received a dock in pay” in recent months from employers trying to weather the pandemic. This is unusual, because while employers cut jobs in every recession, they rarely cut pay for the workers they retain. These wage cut numbers “haven’t received the same attention as job losses,” but reduced pay could present a major barrier to any recovery.

What the experts say

Amateurs get burned in Kodak frenzy

Kodak’s wild stock-market ride offered “a warning for investors who ignore company fundamentals and focus instead on a potential pandemic connection,” said **Geoffrey Rogow** and **Michael Wursthorn** in *The Wall Street Journal*. The Trump administration’s announcement that it was lending \$765 million to Kodak—yes, Kodak—to make drug ingredients set off a market frenzy, with the stock price soaring “as high as \$60 over the following two sessions” and more than 100,000 users on Robinhood jumping in. Professional investors got out as amateurs “were running blind into shares.” One financial adviser bought 162,000 Kodak shares in May at roughly \$2.50 per share and wound up booking a 19-fold return. But **Alex Olson**, who opened his first brokerage account earlier this year, “bought 2,710 shares at an average of \$35 a share” and lost \$30,000 when the stock sank. “I guess what I learned is trading is just gambling,” said Olsen.

How much is a quarter of a Birkin?

If you “can’t afford a Birkin bag or a racehorse,” you can still invest in them, said **Paul Sullivan** in *The New York Times*. An uptick in fractional investing allows anybody to

purchase shares in luxury items. Buyers can’t sell those fractions until after a lockup period, nor do they get to actually hold the products they invest in. That doesn’t faze memorabilia fans such as **John Cochran**, who “invested in shares of 76 different collectibles, including a shirt Michael Jordan wore in a basketball game.” Investors in Birkin bags can get a share in a \$140,000 gray Himalaya. And if you’ve always wanted to feel like a prince, MyRacehorse sells small shares in racehorses.

New perks for the pandemic age

Businesses are getting creative at trying to retain their company culture while working remotely, said **Emma Jacobs** in the *Financial Times*. DoorDash says it has seen increased demand for gift cards that can be used to buy real food for a virtual work lunch. Some companies are “rewarding professionals working from home with food and drink deliveries”—with one ad agency even throwing in its traditional Friday round of after-work beers. One executive there says “drinks would have been the obvious cost to cut, but he wanted to lift morale.” But some employees say they have little need for office-style perks and would prefer “well-being benefits like mindfulness apps” and “access to online therapy.”

Charity of the week



Last week’s devastating explosion in Beirut killed more than 200 people and injured 5,000, disrupted food supplies, and left 300,000 homeless. **GlobalGiving (globalgiving.org)** is raising money through the Beirut Port Explosion Relief Fund to support people affected by the blast. Organized by the Union of Relief and Development Associations, a Lebanese nongovernmental organization with teams on the ground in Beirut, the fund’s goal is to distribute medical aid, supplies, and medications to hospitals and clinics, and food and water to those who have lost their homes. URDA has already set up two mobile clinics and is distributing several hundred food parcels and tens of thousands of water bottles per day.

Each charity we feature has earned a four-star overall rating from Charity Navigator, which rates not-for-profit organizations on the strength of their finances, their governance practices, and the transparency of their operations. Four stars is the group’s highest rating.

WeChat: The next battle in the U.S.-China trade war

The Trump administration last week intensified its “campaign to claw apart the Chinese and American tech worlds,” said **Scott Rosenberg** and **Kyle Daly** in *Axios.com*. After a series of attacks on the Chinese-owned video network TikTok, President Trump signed executive orders that would ban U.S. companies from doing business with not just TikTok but also WeChat, an app central to daily life in China. With American tech platforms largely blocked from China, a ban on WeChat would be a “major disruption” hampering commerce in China and cutting links to the “Chinese diaspora” around the world. The U.S. “has piled one anti-China initiative on top of another,” said **Bob Davis** in *The Wall Street Journal*. China has been cautious in retaliation, aside from some rhetoric about “red lines,” but we may be poised for a major escalation in the trade war. While so far China has said it will stick with the trade accord signed in December, Trump appears to be having second thoughts, saying “I don’t feel the same about the deal.”



WeChat and TikTok, China’s star social apps

“It’s hard to overemphasize the prominence of WeChat in China,” said **Chaim Gartenberg** in *TheVerge.com*. Initially a messaging app, WeChat is now used in China for every kind of transaction. It has a payments system that is accepted almost everywhere, as well as features that cover everything from hailing a taxi to reading the news. A ban on WeChat is a serious blow to China—and one that could also cripple American companies trying to do business there. “An iPhone without WeChat is effectively not a phone at all for the hundreds of millions of Chinese

users who rely on the service.” U.S. companies have also come to rely on WeChat to entice Chinese customers, said **Adam Minter** in *Bloomberg.com*. “Since 2017, Caesars Palace in Las Vegas has let Chinese visitors pay for almost anything using the service.” A ban would discourage these tourists, as well as people who “come to visit relatives who have settled in the U.S., or to tour college campuses with their kids.” Trump is sending a clear message: They’re no longer welcome here.

We’ve seen this approach to technology before, said **Josephine Wolff** in *The New York Times*—from China. “China has maintained strict control over the internet and aggressively blocked foreign tech platforms within its borders.” Now the U.S. is threatening to do the same, putting at risk the vision of an “open and global internet” our tech industry was built on. That’s fine for Trump, who has sold the Republican Party on “a nationalist vision of an America that must stand up to China or be swallowed by it,” said **Eric Boehm** in *Reason*. The administration is pursuing a fantasy of American self-sufficiency that’s repeatedly failed. “The most instantly noticeable effect of Trump’s tariffs was to increase the price of goods imported from China, including medical equipment.” Even worse, the Trump administration was warned that tariffs would disrupt the supply chain for medical equipment. When the pandemic arrived, that’s exactly what happened. Our 18-month trade war with China accomplished nothing, yet now Trump and his advisers are doubling down on an economic nationalism that “will leave the world sicker and poorer.”

A can’t-lose bet that Delta lost

Clifford Krauss and Niraj Chokshi

The New York Times

A bold experiment by Delta Air Lines years ago is coming back to haunt it, said **Clifford Krauss** and **Niraj Chokshi**. In 2012, Delta paid \$150 million for the Monroe Energy oil refinery outside Philadelphia, “the first such purchase by a major U.S. airline.” At the time, jet fuel prices were soaring, global air travel was growing, “refiners were exporting to Africa and Latin America, and a shale-drilling boom was suddenly producing cheap domestic oil for refiners to process.” Delta figured the refinery could reduce the company’s fuel expenses by \$300 million annually, more than recouping its investment in a year. That math made other airlines seem foolish not to make

similar bets. But “the energy industry critics that Delta dismissed appear to have correctly identified the flaws in the strategy.” Oil refineries are risky, expensive, tightly regulated, and earn thin margins even in the best of times. There were signs of trouble in 2012—such as stricter fuel economy standards—that Delta chose to ignore. Now the pandemic has crippled demand for oil. Jet fuel, known as the “Steady Eddie” of the refinery business, is in an even steeper downturn with so few people flying. Monroe lost \$114 million in the second quarter and has become a liability at a time when “one of the best-run airlines in the country” can ill afford more losses.

Going back on our word to trade allies

Editorial

The Wall Street Journal

Tariff Man is back, said *The Wall Street Journal* in an editorial. “With his re-election on the ropes, President Trump returned to his favorite household remedy,” reimposing a 10 percent tariff on Canadian aluminum only a month after his “new NAFTA,” the United States–Mexico–Canada (USMCA) agreement, officially went into effect. The agreement included a provision for levies if imports surged “beyond historic volumes of trade.” That gave the president an opening, and at a visit to a Whirlpool factory in Ohio last week, Trump invoked the clause, claiming our neighbors are “taking advantage of us, as usual.” That’s not true: Imports of aluminum are actually below the

level of 2017. But two well-connected U.S. aluminum producers have lobbied for new tariffs. The Trump administration has obliged them despite the economic harm. The tariffs will raise prices for end users such as beer companies, automakers—and Whirlpool, which complained in 2018 that Trump’s steel and aluminum tariffs “had significantly raised production costs.” Canada, predictably, responded with \$2.7 billion in additional taxes on U.S. exports of aluminum products such as bicycles, golf clubs, and refrigerators. This is “Trump at his policy worst: He hurts U.S. industry and consumers, while telling America’s friends that his word on trade can’t be trusted.”

The journalist who matched grit with elegance

Pete Hamill

1935–2020

Pete Hamill was New York City's tabloid poet. As a columnist for the *New York Post* and *Daily News* in an era when print newspapers thrived, the Brooklyn native filed thousands of dispatches chronicling life in the five boroughs, writing about crime, politics, sports, class, race, and the travails of average Joes. A high-school dropout who could quote Faulkner and Balzac, he had a flair for language that was both blunt and erudite. Hamill filed dispatches from the Vietnam War and the conflict in Northern Ireland, interviewed Che Guevara and Martin Luther King Jr., and lived in San Juan, Rome, and Barcelona. He wrote novels, short stories, and a best-selling memoir, *A Drinking Life*. His most enduring subject, though, was his hometown. "New York," he wrote in 2004, "is a city of daily irritations, occasional horrors, hourly tests of will and even courage, and huge dollops of pure beauty."

The oldest of seven children born to Irish immigrants, Hamill grew up in a "crowded, \$60-a-month apartment," said the *New York Daily News*. His father worked at a grocery store and a munitions plant; his mother was a hospital midwife and movie-theater cashier. "Fascinated



with comic books, he began drawing," said *The New York Times*, and after a stint as a sheet-metal worker, a tour in the Navy, and a spell in art school, he spent three years as a graphic designer. "But his future remained cloudy" until he wrote a letter to the editor of the *Post* in 1960 asking for a tryout. Smitten by the clamor of the newsroom, he was offered a spot on the overnight desk, "chasing murders at two in the morning," he later wrote.

When Hamill turned to magazine writing, his "articles for *Esquire* and *New York* magazine placed him at the vanguard of the New Journalism movement," said *The Washington Post*. Hamill was a sometime news item himself, thanks to romances with Shirley MacLaine, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, and Linda Ronstadt. Slowed in later life by kidney disease and other ailments, Hamill returned to Brooklyn in 2016 after years in Manhattan, working on a final book about the borough and buying a cemetery plot near his boyhood home—close by the resting spot of the infamous New York political fixer Boss Tweed. "If you're going to spend an eternity," he said, "better with a rogue than with a saint who would drive you into slumber."

The foreign policy expert who advised presidents

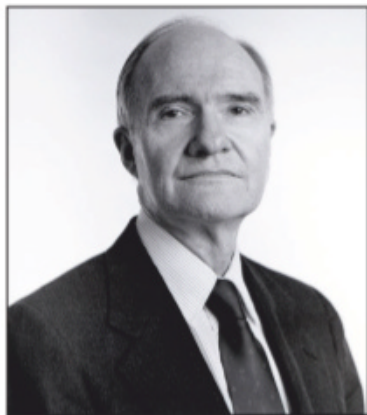
Brent Scowcroft

1925–2020

Brent Scowcroft was a backstage power player in Washington for four decades.

The foreign policy expert carried the nuclear "football" for President Richard Nixon, served as national security adviser to Presidents Gerald Ford and George H.W. Bush, and gave advice to Jimmy Carter and Barack Obama. Scowcroft was involved in many of the biggest diplomatic and military actions of the postwar era: He accompanied Nixon to China in 1972, orchestrated the U.S. evacuation from Saigon in 1975, and helped assemble the alliance that ousted Iraqi troops from Kuwait in 1991. Scowcroft favored restraint in foreign policy—he urged Bush to avoid triumphalism when the USSR collapsed, warning it might spark a backlash in Moscow. "I don't have a quick, innovative mind," Scowcroft said. "What I do is pick out good ideas from bad ideas."

He was born in Ogden, Utah, "where his father was a wholesale grocer," said *The Washington Post*. Scowcroft graduated from West Point in 1947 and joined the Air Force with ambitions of becoming a fighter pilot. But he broke his back during a 1949 crash landing and, effectively barred from flying, turned to academia, studying



international relations and teaching Russian at West Point. "His career took him to increasingly powerful policy jobs in Washington," said *The Wall Street Journal*. He became a military assistant to Nixon in 1972 and a deputy to Henry Kissinger, then head of national security, the following year. After Nixon resigned in 1974, Scowcroft was appointed national security adviser under President Ford.

Scowcroft left government in 1977 but returned to the White House under the first President Bush, said *The New York Times*. He helped smooth relations with China after the Tiananmen Square massacre, and during Operation Desert Storm he urged Bush not to depose Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein—saying America would be forced to occupy Baghdad. In 2002, he publicly opposed President George W. Bush's plans to oust Hussein, again warning of the steep price America would play in blood and treasure. This time, his advice wasn't heeded. Scowcroft won many awards and medals during his decades of service, but his favorite was Bush Sr.'s "Scowcroft Award for Somnolent Excellence"—a prize for dozing off at meetings but recovering fast enough to make it seem as if he'd merely been locked in deep thought.

The Buffett sibling who worked hard to give it all away

Doris Buffett and her younger brother Warren, the founder of Berkshire Hathaway, had perfectly matching passions. "Warren loves to make

Doris Buffett

1928–2020

money," Doris explained, "and I love to give it away." When her

brother announced in 2006 that he intended to donate nearly his entire \$77 billion fortune before he died, Doris personally sifted through the ensuing flood of requests for help, and wrote checks to people who'd asked for things as small as money to pay for dentures, wheelchairs, and automobile repairs. She also did big things, donating tens of millions of dollars to organizations that educate prisoners, aid victims of domestic violence, and improve the lives of the mentally ill. In all, Doris gave away \$200 million of her own wealth and even more of her brother's. "The plan," said Doris, "is for my last check to bounce."

She was born in Omaha to a father who was a stockbroker and a Republican congressman. Her homemaker mother, who likely "suffered undiagnosed bipolar disorder," subjected young Doris to a daily torrent of emotional abuse, said the Culpeper, Va., *Star-Exponent*. At a young age, Doris said, she decided that "if there was no fairy godmother for me, maybe I could be one for others."

"Doris eschewed giving money to what she jokingly called 'the SOBs'—the symphony, opera, and ballet," said the *Omaha World-Herald*. Instead she focused on ordinary people in need. Her checks in response to letters for help averaged about \$5,000 and often came with some tough love—advising recipients how they could make extra money babysitting, for example. In 2010, she was asked what she wanted her epitaph to say. "She made a difference," Doris replied. "Unless you do, why were you here?"

The man who wouldn't look away

Maj. Claude Eatherly piloted the weather plane that surveyed Hiroshima before it was bombed, said Anne Harrington in The New York Times Magazine. He was left racked with guilt—and pilloried for his regrets.

THE B-29 BOMBER banked hard to avoid the blast. The explosion lit the plane's interior with a brilliant flash, so bright that some of the aviators momentarily thought they had been blinded. More than one noted a strange metallic taste in his mouth. A loud clap broke around them as the first of three shock waves hit, causing the plane's aluminum body to vibrate violently. Looking down, they saw the fireball unfurling.

The American airmen who flew the mission to drop the atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945, were witnessing a man-made cataclysm unlike anything seen in the previous history of human warfare. They watched as fire swallowed the city whole: "It was like no ordinary fire," a crew member later recalled. "It contained a dozen colors, all of them blindingly bright." Just when it appeared that the explosion was subsiding, "a kind of mushroom spurted out of the top and traveled up, up to what some say was a distance of 60,000 or 70,000 feet."

The atomic bomb was the most ferociously deadly weapon ever created by human ingenuity—a technology that multiplied the power of these few men and planes to a degree out of all comprehensible scale. In Hiroshima alone, some 70,000 people were killed instantly—a horrific deed fit for gods or monsters—but overhead in their plane the airmen were normal men in human bodies, no more able than anyone else to fully comprehend or bear responsibility for the mission they had been chosen to execute.

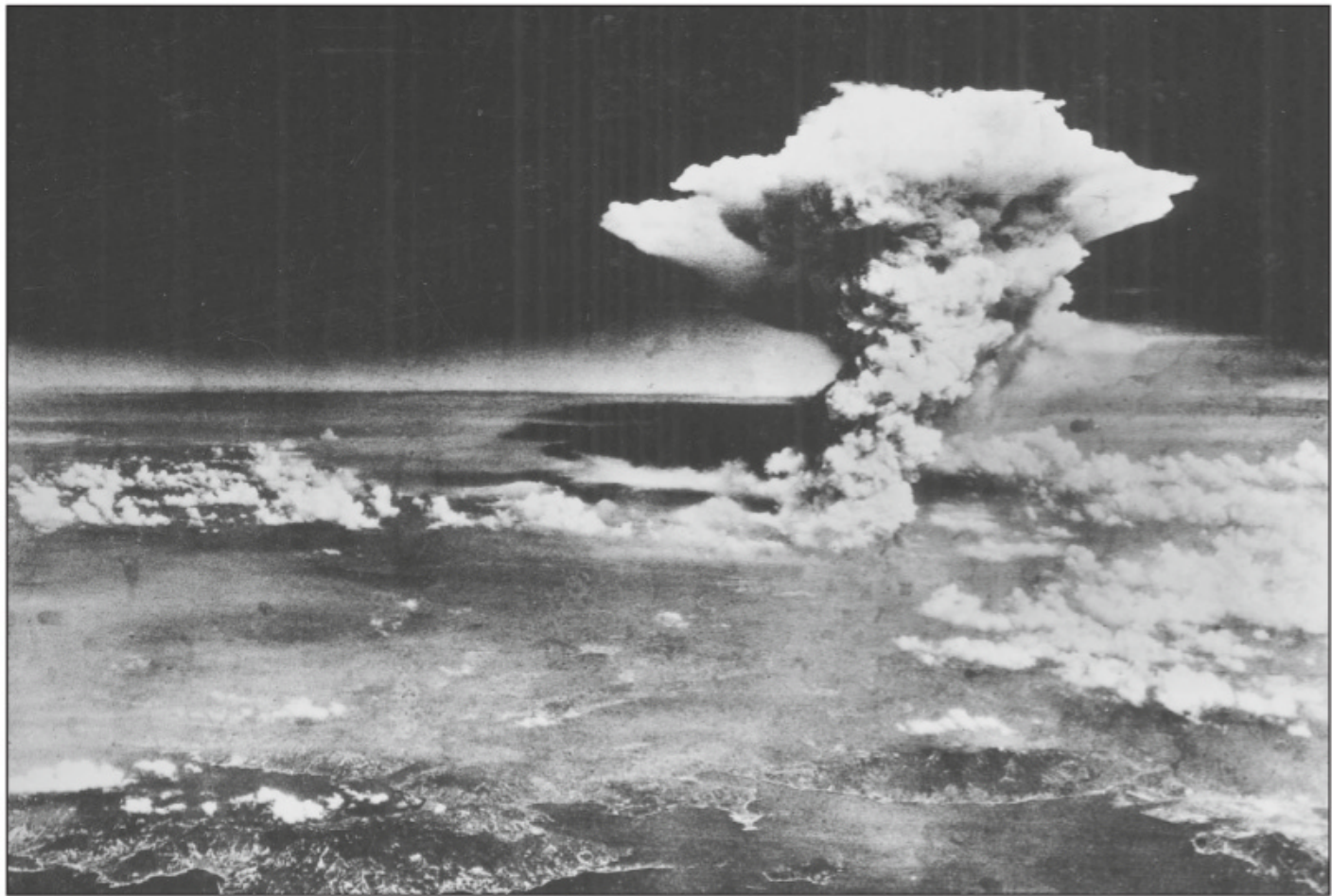
In the ensuing decades, only one of the 90 servicemen who flew the atomic bombing missions, Maj. Claude Eatherly, came forward to publicly declare that he felt remorse for what he had done. Eatherly, then an outgoing 26-year-old Texan, piloted the advance weather plane tasked with assessing target visibility over Hiroshima, giving the go-ahead to drop the bomb that day. His role in the bombing would haunt him for the rest of his life.

The discrepancy between the tremendous power of humanity's inventions and the limited ability of any single person to comprehend, let alone control, the moral and practical implications of that power, is what

Günther Anders, the postwar German-Jewish philosopher and antinuclear activist, called "the Promethean gap."

Prometheus is a character from Greek mythology who stole fire from the gods and gave it to humans. With fire, humans were launched on the road to ever more powerful inventions—a cascade of technological advances that would also unleash new forms of death, destruction, and exploitation. In the Greek myth, the gods punished Prometheus with eternal torment.

For Anders, the U.S. service members tasked with dropping the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the prime example of people caught in the Promethean gap. On the one hand, these U.S. servicemen were cogs in the atomic machine. They were couriers sent to deliver a deadly message about U.S. capability and commitment to winning the war. If one of them had declined the assignment, someone else would have stepped up to fill his shoes. Under these circumstances, it was possible to be "guiltlessly guilty." On the other hand, as participants in and witnesses to the violence, these men came closer to connecting with the physical consequences of and responsibility for their actions than any others.



Aug. 6, 1945: The atomic bomb put incomprehensible powers of destruction in human hands.

ONCE THEIR INITIAL sense of astonishment subsided, most of the airmen reconciled themselves to the bombings by focusing on their affiliation to their fellow American servicemen, whose lives they may have saved by obviating the need for a ground invasion of Japan. Others simply distanced themselves from the morality of the decision entirely.

Col. Paul Tibbets Jr., who commanded the Army Air Forces unit tasked with delivering the atomic bombs and piloted the plane that dropped the bomb on Hiroshima, defended his actions until his dying days. "I made up my mind then that the morality of dropping that bomb was not my business," he told an interviewer in 1989. "I have never lost a night's sleep on the deal."

Unlike Tibbets, Eatherly reported suffering from nightmares about the bombings, and his guilt drove him into a spiral of self-sabotage. In April 1957, *Newsweek* ran an article, "Hero in Handcuffs," that reported that Eatherly was in a jail cell in Fort Worth after breaking into two post offices in rural Texas. It described a tattered post-war life: Eatherly had been in and out of psychiatric treatment at a VA hospital in Waco, had served time in a New Orleans



Eatherly's plane, the Straight Flush; Eatherly, Dallas city jail, 1959 (r.)

jail for forging a check, and had been involved in a series of stickups at small-town grocery stores. But his crimes were so poorly executed—at least once he fled the scene, leaving the money behind—that his psychiatrist and one of his defense attorneys separately reached the conclusion that Eatherly must have intended to get caught.

At his trial for the post-office burglaries, Eatherly's psychiatrist testified that his patient suffered from a guilt complex stemming above all from his role in the bombing of Hiroshima. In carrying out these petty crimes, what Eatherly actually wanted was punishment. A jury found him "not guilty by reason of insanity," and he was released.

Eatherly's guilt fascinated Anders because it provided him with a glimmer of hope for humanity—a path forward for nuclear peace activists through the Promethean gap. For Eatherly, his dutiful service and the standard justification that the atomic bombings saved lives by ending the war, were not enough to quiet his conscience. In 1959, Anders wrote to Eatherly and they struck up a correspondence. Anders was eager to co-opt the pilot's story in the service of generating political will to elimi-

nate nuclear weapons, casting Eatherly as "a symbol of the future." For his part, Eatherly quickly developed the hope that Anders would provide the platform that he lacked.

"Through writers like yourself," Eatherly wrote in one of his first letters to Anders, "someone will...give a message that will influence the world toward a reconciliation and peace. You may be the man, if I can be of any help to you, count on me."

In a 1961 interview with reporter Ronnie Dugger, Eatherly explained that he was not convinced by the orthodox explanation about the atomic bomb as a war-winning weapon; the Japanese were putting up so little resistance by early August that Eatherly believed the war would have ended even without the nuclear devastation.

Logically, he knew that if it had not been him, it would have been someone else to give the go-ahead to drop the bomb. Yet he still appeared to feel, and suffer under, the enormity of his role in the atomic bombings. Anders saw in Eatherly's behavior a person attempting, in his own way, to be held accountable for his actions rather than finding ways to disclaim or reject responsibility.

With Anders' encouragement, Eatherly sent a message to the people of Hiroshima. "I told them I was the major that gave the 'go-ahead' to destroy Hiroshima, that I was unable to forget the act, and that the guilt of the act has caused me great suffering," Eatherly reported to Anders. "I asked them to forgive me." Thirty "girls of Hiroshima," young *hibakusha*, or atomic bomb victims, left alive but scarred by the blast, responded. "We have learned to feel towards you a fellow-feeling," they wrote, "thinking that you are also a victim of war like us."

BY THE 1960S, Eatherly became something of a cause célèbre, especially in war-ravaged Europe and Asia where his remorse fulfilled a deep-seated desire for compassion. In 1961, Anders published

his correspondence with Eatherly, complete with a preface from the renowned British philosopher, mathematician, and anti-nuclear activist Bertrand Russell. In 1962, Eatherly was one of four people given "Hiroshima Awards" for "outstanding contributions to world peace" at a major peace demonstration in New York. NBC made a TV drama based on his story. The British papers embraced him as a symbol of antinuclear protest. Poets described his plight in verse.

The more visible Eatherly became as a symbol of peace and disarmament, the more heated the debate was about the sincerity of his experiences and feelings. Journalists wrote detailed books and articles examining his claims and motives.

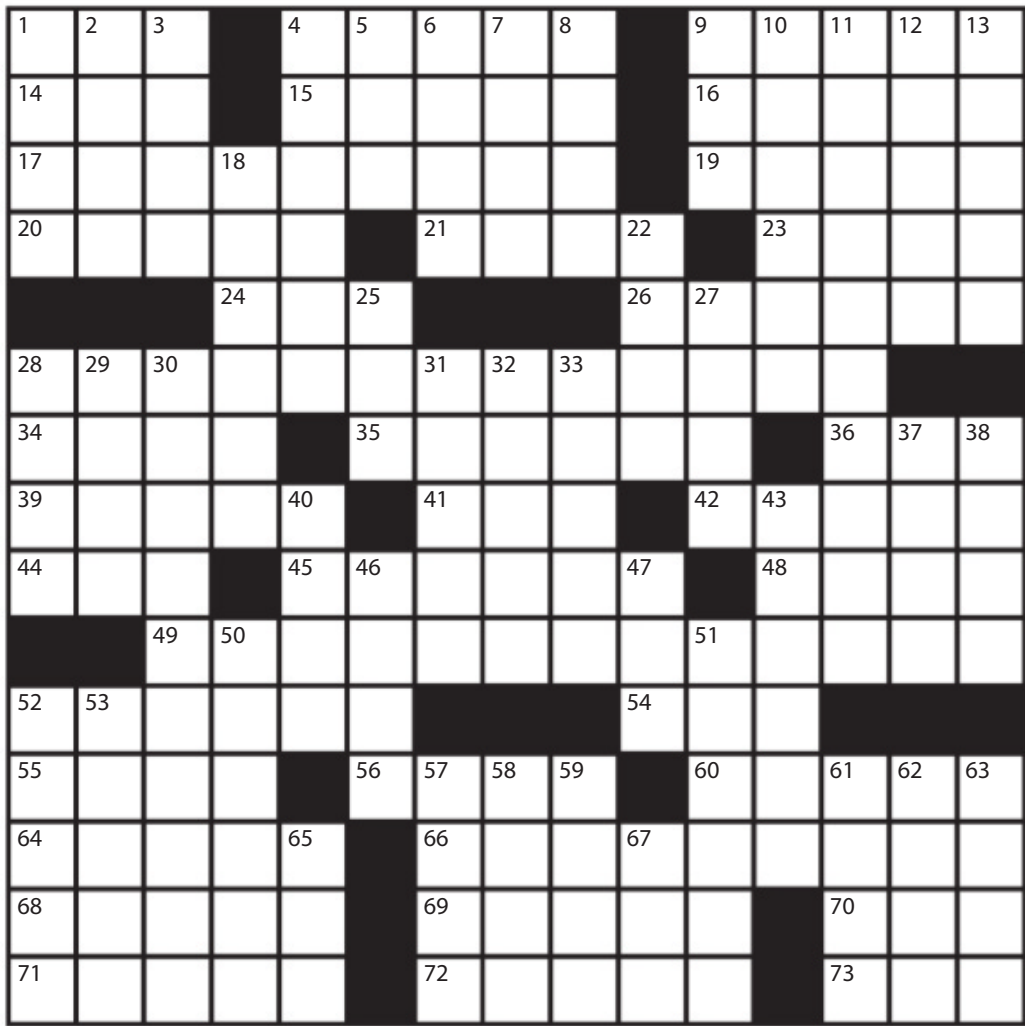
"Is it possible," investigative reporter William Bradford Huie asked in his 1965 book, *The Hiroshima Pilot*, "that Eatherly feigned guilt to attract attention and perhaps profit?" Instead of guilt, Huie suggested an inferiority complex. "The truth," he concluded, "seems to be that when Claude Eatherly began evidencing mental illness and 'turning to crime,' he was a disappointed and immature man who thought he had been overlooked.... Instead of being the Hero of Hiroshima, he was a man who was disappointed at having been left out of the attack on Hiroshima." Eatherly himself was silenced by throat cancer and died in 1978, at the age of 59, in a veterans hospital in Houston.

We are now living in the 75th year of the atomic age. Eatherly's experiences deepen our understanding of the human dimensions of what it means to undertake enormous acts of wartime violence. His remorse highlighted the ethical quandary of winning a righteous war that nevertheless cost such a huge toll in human lives. Passing judgment on whether he was a hero for speaking out about his suffering, or a malingerer out to capitalize on his wartime experiences, became a way to stake a claim within the debate about nuclear weapons.

Eatherly was aware of his predicament, and it grew into a larger question on the use of nuclear weapons that would go on to outlast him and his legacy: "I have been having such difficulty in getting society to recognize the fact of my guilt, which I have long since realized," Eatherly lamented to Anders in one of his letters. "The truth is that society simply cannot accept the fact of my guilt without at the same time recognizing its own far deeper guilt."

This story originally appeared in The New York Times Magazine. Used with permission.

Crossword No. 564: Help Wanted by Matt Gaffney



- ACROSS**
- 1 Animal with a beard
 - 4 Wedding wear
 - 9 Far from suitable
 - 14 Dorm monitors
 - 15 Old Apple laptop
 - 16 Less daring
 - 17 "Can you ever forgive me?"
 - 19 In perfect harmony
 - 20 Chutzpah
 - 21 Builders of Palenque
 - 23 Talking Stick Resort Arena team
 - 24 Cohen played by Sacha Baron Cohen in Netflix's *The Spy*
 - 26 Origami birds
 - 28 Bar order that'll perk you up
 - 34 Keep going with the brakes on
 - 35 Imperiled
 - 36 Time
 - 39 Wine grape
 - 41 Nosh on
 - 42 Reversed the effects of
 - 44 Gen. Paul Nakasone is its director
 - 45 Like some discussions and car seats
 - 48 Hankering
 - 49 *CBS Sunday Morning* host from 1994 to 2016
 - 52 Noise from a fan
 - 54 To the ___ degree
 - 55 Pleasant vocal feature
 - 56 Reversible name
 - 60 Societal spirit
 - 64 Texas mission
 - 66 He hit 66 home runs in 1998
 - 68 Spring feast
 - 69 Krispy ___ (rival of Dunkin')
 - 70 Layer, as of a paper towel
 - 71 Part of LGBTQIA+
 - 72 Detector in the depths
 - 73 Three sailors were rescued from a tiny Micronesian island last week after pilots spotted this written in the sand; can you spot it four times in this puzzle grid?
 - 29 Snow-covered pair
 - 30 Drink in a No. 1 song of 1979
 - 31 Pilfer
 - 32 Speak to the people
 - 33 Archaeologists' workplaces
 - 37 Yummy, in Yucatán
 - 38 Unable to focus, maybe
 - 40 In comparison with
 - 43 Dark periods
 - 46 "Consequently..."
 - 47 Lemon on CNN
 - 50 Many Scorsese characters
 - 51 He ran against Biden and Warren
 - 52 Awesome time
 - 53 Member of an Edmonton team
 - 57 Sounds to the misbehaving
 - 58 Root made into chips
 - 59 Hint at events to come
 - 61 Brewer's purchase
 - 62 City that controversially began to relocate a series of Picasso murals last month
 - 63 Verbalizes
 - 65 Where some RNs work
 - 67 Sport for Joe Rogan
- DOWN**
- 1 Cheshire Cat's feature
 - 2 Identify
 - 3 Leningrad's nat.
 - 4 Supermodel Bündchen
 - 5 Letters after a price
 - 6 Critter on a hook
 - 7 *A Doll's House* role
 - 8 Vodka in a blue bottle
 - 9 Call ___ day (head home)
 - 10 Caribbean capital where a new digital currency, the Bahamian Sand Dollar, will launch in October
 - 11 Was the same as
 - 12 Pasta sometimes served "pomodoro"
 - 13 Long lock of hair
 - 18 Go too far with
 - 22 *Hamilton* has two
 - 25 Ariana Grande's "God ___ Woman"
 - 27 Media player brand
 - 28 *The Last Dance* airer

The Week Contest

This week's question: Murphys Irish Bar in Corralejo, Spain, has removed Neil Diamond's "Sweet Caroline" from its music menu because patrons can't resist singing along—potentially spraying clouds of coronavirus-laden droplets around the bar. If a musician were to rewrite a classic pop song to encourage people to adopt safe pandemic practices, what should the track be titled?

Last week's contest: A band of baboons at a British drive-through safari is reportedly menacing customers with an assortment of stolen weapons, including screwdrivers, knives, and a chain saw. Please come up with an advertising slogan that the safari could use to promote this unusual attraction.

THE WINNER: Meet furious George
Susan Zivich, Hebron, Ind.

SECOND PLACE: Where the baboons are more like guerrillas
Ken Kellam III, Dallas

THIRD PLACE: Where the wild things are armed
C.A. Papapietro, Port Jefferson, N.Y.

For runners-up and complete contest rules, please go to theweek.com/contest.

How to enter: Submissions should be emailed to contest@theweek.com. Please include your name, address, and daytime telephone number for verification; this week, type "Change of tune" in the subject line. Entries are due by noon, Eastern Time, Tuesday, Aug. 18. Winners will appear on the Puzzle Page next issue and at theweek.com/puzzles on Friday, Aug. 21. In the case of identical or similar entries, the first one received gets credit.

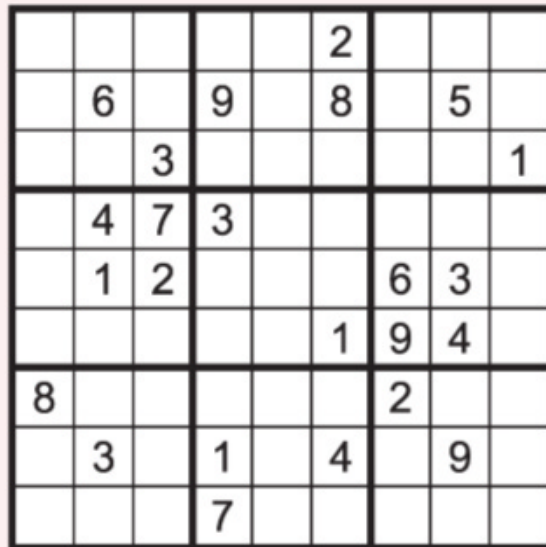


◀ The winner gets a one-year subscription to *The Week*.

Sudoku

Fill in all the boxes so that each row, column, and outlined square includes all the numbers from 1 through 9.

Difficulty:
hard



Find the solutions to all *The Week's* puzzles online: www.theweek.com/puzzle.

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